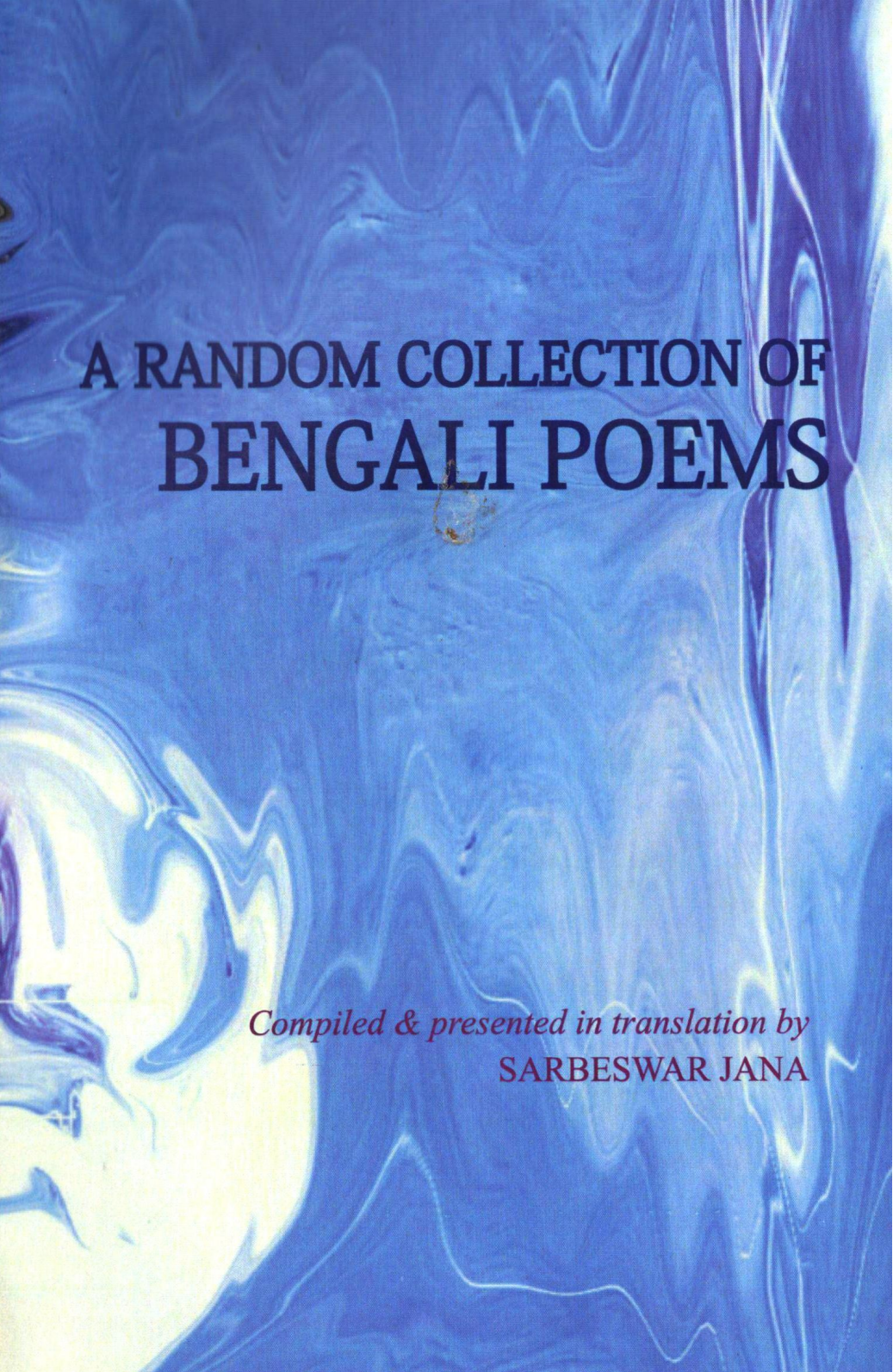


The background of the entire cover is a marbled paper pattern. It features swirling, wavy lines in various shades of blue, from deep navy to light sky blue, interspersed with white and cream-colored areas. The pattern is organic and fluid, typical of traditional marbling techniques.

A RANDOM COLLECTION OF BENGALI POEMS

Compiled & presented in translation by
SARBESWAR JANA

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Noirhita Lights

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Sarbeswar Jana

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Dedicated lovingly to

Shri Rm. Palaniappan

**An eminent Engineer and Industrialist and
one of author's closest friends
from amongst the cosmopolitan environment of
HMT Ltd.**

For Rhimjhim
for her emerging interest in poetry

By the same author:

beauteous bengal

(translation of Jibanananda Das' *Ruposi Bangla*)

Brajangana Kabya

(translation of Michael Madhusudan Dutt's,
with a note on Michael's time in Bengal)

Forthcoming titles:

Anubade Kabita (in Bengali from English)

Bengal Timeline

Pratyabartan (Bengali poems)

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FOREWORD

When I was requested by Mr. Ashoke Ghosh, formerly of UCO Bank, to write the foreword for a book of poetry – a work of translation of various Bengali poems, I was pleasantly surprised and curious.

It is a fact that throughout my working life in the finance sector, I was keenly interested in literature. During my posting in Kolkata, I came in touch with Bengali poetry written by the great poets of Bengal of whom Rabindranath Tagore was the greatest. With my limited knowledge of Bengali, I began to engage in studies and discussion on poetry, whenever time permitted.

When I was told that the subject book is authored by Mr. Sarbeswar Jana, a part-time writer and actually a professional engineer, now retired as myself, I went through the poems with much keenness. I felt that here was an idea that needed supporting. Plainly, the author's interest is to spread the message of Bengali poetry through a common medium like English throughout India. His purpose evidently is to take Bengali poets and poetry across the language barrier, inspiring others of different regional languages to do likewise, so that the entire country is 'poetically' integrated, and the works are understood and appreciated. This was a commendable job.

The author has attempted to compress in this volume Bengali poetry of a very important period of about 150 years, post-

modern, – excluding, I believe, the older-period greats like Kashi-ram Das, Krittibas Ojha, Chandidas, Bidyapati, Bharat Chandra Rai Gunakar, Gupta Kabi and the genius poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt and many others.

This book at the least shows the way how a reconnaissance of the poetry of numerous regional languages of India, over a limited period, could be presented to the world at large to consider.

I hope that the author's attempt reflects in some measure the brilliance, the expanse, the wide coverage of subjects, the diversity of thought processes, the depth of thinking and messages of Bengali poets and where their interests, concerns and sympathies lie.

I also hope that this will be relished by the Bengali and non-Bengali poetry-loving public and would be an useful addition to libraries in all the states of India, where the author and the publishers are planning to forward freely. I appreciate the gesture whole-heartedly. May his mission of spreading poetry be successful.

Shastri Nagar, Kullu,
Himachal Pradesh

A.C.Slath
17. 05. 2015

THE TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Sometimes, it necessitates a clarification.

It is a habit of the translator, bad or good, to translate 'English to Bengali' and 'Bengali to English', mainly poems. It is a compulsive spare-time activity – a passion, a work of love. As a result, the details of originals, like their sources, dates of publication or even the first lines in Bengali could not be noted. Details of some of the poets are certainly available, but anyway, it would have been an incomplete job, which is not desirable.

The collection has been made over years, as and when a poem appealed and at the same time, author's time permitted. It is the coincidence that generated a translation.

The translator begs to be excused by the authors/publishers of the original poems for his inability to seek permission individually; but he thanks all of them most gratefully and declares that the sole motive behind this exercise is anything but profits. The main purpose is to popularize Bengali poetry to the world-at-large.

It is a random collection; if it tends to reveal a character, or a particular pattern or bias, it is accidental. The choice of authors is also in-deliberate. The choice of authors or particular poems does not mean that other poets or other poems are not preferred. At best it is a 'coincidental' and not a 'preferential' collection.

The order of the poems in the collection does not reveal any chronology or subjectivity or classification, but is, as they were

done; out of all, that were done, a random selection is made. After all, whoever reads poetry subject-wise? Is chronologicality of poetry of any importance, other than for researchers? Arranging alphabetically, has no meaning, when only the Bengali 'first lines' would have rung the bell and that too, to the Bengali ears only!

Readers may be Bengalees, may be not; the collection might provide a bird's eye view (not of a hawk, but of a dove) of the pasture of Bengali poems, (excluding a great many pre-moderns).

Bengalees are avid poetry-writers. Million of poems are being written every year, bulk of which is published in various periodicals – weeklies, bi-weeklies, fortnightlies, monthlies, bi-annuals, annuals – in news papers, school-college-festival magazines, apart from poets' published books and hundreds of thousands of 'little magazines'.

It may be that Bengalees compulsively write more poems, than read them; but poetry is in the Bengali air. Poetry runs in the Bengali blood.

Those, who are bitten by the poetry-bug, cannot do without them, Bengalees or non-Bengalees.

If some of the poems of the collection gives some pleasure to, or mystifies some of the readers and make him seek the originals or is drawn to a particular poet or to Bengali poetry in general, the translator's labour would have been amply rewarded.

However, this random anthology will, I hope, try to demonstrate, – if demonstration is ever called for, – that the varied subjects, messages and appeal of poetry in general, – be it in any language or in any age, – are universal and of permanent interest.

Once again, the translator, well-past-eighty, a professional engineer begs the indulgence of the past and the living poets to tolerate the audacity and discrepancies, – considering and acknowledging the critique that: "Who is this upstart to dare translate fine poems of so eminent poets?"

The author is fully responsible for any inaccuracy or misinter-

pretation of the poems. Suggestions/corrections will be gratefully acknowledged on land-line 033-23372319, Cells: 9748974632 / 9433033102 or mail: sarbeswar666@gmail.com.

Thanks are due to:

· Shri Rm. Palaniappan of CHENNAI for kindly agreeing for dedication of the book to him.

· Shri A.C. Lath of Kullu (H.P.) for kindly agreeing to writing a Foreward.

· Noirhita Lights for agreeing to lend the name to publish the book on behalf of the author.

Next in the queue is the 'English to Bengali' series, for those who would like them.

S. Jana

A RANDOM COLLECTION OF
BENGALI POEMS

A PRESENT

SHIBAPRASAD GANGOPADHYAY

The poet – blind must he be,
Whose rhyme is hard to see.
A poetry paints a golden sunset,
Or must and bloom into a lotus' fest.
If doesn't, either dump – in a dustbin,
And heap it with utter disdain.
Or let it, fast, into ashes burn,
And be blown into the sky and rain;
Return it may to settle upon
Petals of lotus or waves of ocean.
But if it's a piece of poetry,
Paint it must to lift a heart sultry.

I THINK

SHAKTI CHATTOPADHYAY

I think, it's better to be aloof.
Time has only soiled my hands.
I have soiled your hands too;
But never thought of you.

Now at night time
When I stand near the precipice,
The moon beckons me, "Come, come ye"
Again sleepily I stand on the Ganges,
And the pyre beckons "Come come ye".

I can go,

'Can go anywhere anytime, I like.
But why should I? why should I?
I would rather plant
A kiss on my child's cheek.
I will go, not now, not for a song
I will, besides me, take you along.
I will go to the eternal
Never accepting
An untimely funeral.

DISPLACEMENT

JIBANANANDA DAS

Displaced from security,
Unmasked from reality,
The sinews of eternity,
Freed from hands of clock
Shows through chinks of rock;
The beach- an endless continuity.
Circumstances change,
Backdrop and the range,

Light and shadows hinge;
What ends in which?
The Sun is rich;
Darkness in the fringe;
Does brightness cringe?

The Sun is black,
The depth is muck,
A crack creates a depth
When continuity slept.

DAYS AND NIGHT

JIBANANANDA DAS

The day ended in nothingness;
The night will, in hopeless frustration.
Life is nothing but a gestation
To end day and night
In slow death of a withering mess.

Only the habits are to be tinkered;
Still all the cantankerous
Are shrouded with cool dew drops;
Still all the birds find shelter at night;
All wise fools find their beds to rest;
And I am all alone, –
Though a moment could build a Rome.

DROWING

SADHANA CHATTOPADHYAY

I'd drown myself
In the mystery of the green leaves,
In the pinkish yellow beauty
Of the blooming breast of flower;
I'd drown myself
In the laziness of the afternoon shine,
In the shivering melody
Of the end of day's power;
I'd lose myself
In the crowded stars of diamond,
In the plaintive shadow
Of approaching eve.
I'd sink also in the glamour of
Full light mood
In the flood of rising sun's beaming motive.
I'd drown myself in the pouring rain's feast,
In the disturbing fragrance
Of Malati flowers.
I'd lose in the blue horizon's instance,
In the calmness of the depth of bowers.

I'd drown myself, I'd vanish,
I'd lose my tongue;
Then perhaps would still be
My love's pang.

A CURSE

KAZI NAZRUL ISLAM

So strong am I,
I have broken the chain of Destiny.

Your ancient and endless Destiny –
Is dead, trampled under my feet.
Today I remember the day right
The day I first awoke within myself.
And your Master of the universe safe
Cried out in anguish
And His bright beaming face extinguished
And black with fear
And your cowardly Destiny, dear,
Groaned and squealed and said
In a trembling voice staid:
“Oh! Save me, save me from this mess!
“Oh! My own creation – a curse!
“My replica – the great fantastic – ‘I’,
“Oh! My Lord, you’re my Master
“From this very day”.

I heard the bewailing
And laughed out in sarcasm, baying,
With volcanic eruption of ecstasy,
Like a thunder on a cloudless day
Of scorching sun and that was the day
Your so-called Creator was in dismay

And experienced fear
For the first time ever.
And that was when, dear,
The Universe heard and before never

The music of pain And suffering and crying!
This is the destructive, poisonous serpent, – 'I'.
Out to finish the Destiny of superstition, your God,
And the Destiny's destination, – adobe
The bondage of customs and inhibitions and cry!

But no, I do not agree,
I may be a curse but won't die!

THE IMMATURE SONG OF REVOLUTION

SARAT KUMAR MUKHOPADHYAY

What is dynamism
I think, I saw it
Ten years ago
In a rustic setting
A little away from Delhi
At a place called Faridabad.

Now jobs are available there
Demand of goods too
Though skilled men are scarce quite.

About a year ago
I stopped at Aurangabad market place
On my way to Ellora
Only the other day
Rocky and barren soil
Dirty, dusty and solitary.
Dynamism has transformed
Even this into a beauty.

There is plenty of work there
Marble floors and an industrial town are.
Is it not true
We too wanted something
At Purulia and Haldia?
Why didn't we achieve anything?
Was it not due to –
That we lacked dynamism?
Is it not true
That we are ashamed of admitting?

Where is work, oh! Where are the jobs?
I continue to see the Bengalee youth,
Charminar in mouth,
Jobless and useless.
But then there are people
Who plant flags in his hands,
Who pump in immature songs
Of revolution onto their lips
And brain-wash them.

But still day after day
Purulia is turning dustier and dirtier
And Haldia is gathering silt
And the Minister sees them from the plane.

Whenever I see
A frustrated sad Bengalee face
I feel like asking him
Would you bloody hell still continue
For another thirty long years
In this dead joint family
Called India?

PREMA-LUXMI

SADHANAMUKHOPADHYAY

When she looked at me
With her eye-lids laden with cloud,
In her breast the depth of melody Ganga,
That dissolves rocks;
I looked at her eyes too
And my eyes did not wink
And I could not speak
And that was Love.

The world smells of
A garland of Jasmines,
That the world made;
It is the blessings
In the conch bangles of Uma
As if flashes of lighting
Calm in its path!
It sets you thinking
It is the meditation on Love.

It tells humanity
"Be good and love".
The illusion of deep far sight
Present in her eyes
Even in the streets
Of this generous world,
She inspires endless flowers to bloom.

THE FINAL REALISATION

SUNIL BOSE

What and with what must I strike
To create a sweet jingling sound?
What must be rubbed with what
To create a bursting riot of fire?
Whom do I beg to agree
So that in a moment's time
The atmosphere vibrates
With beauty of seven rainbows?
Where and where must a fissure be made
To create a gurgling spring
Down the breast of an aging mountain?

These – yes, these are the questions I think
And I search and I meditate
Day and night
Night after day;
I am in search of
That tremendous joy.

Things must strike and rub
Agree or disintegrate,
From which I shall invent
That tremendous joy
And like Archimedes
Shall jump out of over-flowing cistern
Full of inspiration
And shall run and run
Proclaiming "Eureka, Eureka, Eureka".

MY DAUGHTER

SADHANA MUKHOPADHYAY

I have become emaciated,
My face is distorted with pimples and wrinkles,
I am not at all sorry for it.
I bequeathed my youth
To my own offspring.

Her lips are full
Like juicy petals of lime,
The skin of her hands
Has tender hairlets,
The sporting deer
Can be seen in her dear half-open eyes.

My morning is,
When her face is bright.
Her sorrow plunges me into darkness.

Her well formed nose,
Like Krishna's flute,
Attracts many a youth
Eager to adorn it with pearls.
The laughter of her white teeth
Puts lilies to shame.
Seeing her, roses fall in heaps at her feet.
There are young minds
Who would also like to die to be a decoration
On her soft lotus feet.

The male will never fathom
The depth of her heart
But I know a little – just a little

Out of my in-born wisdom,
Being a woman – being the mother,
Through the inner link
But even I know a little
Just a little!

A DOG IN THE FOREST OF HESADI
BRATO CHAKRABORTY

I am not going to any Heaven
I've come to Bihar only
A black sickly dog follows me alone
All the time just next to me.

I, not a truthful man
No Yudhisthira am I
Greedy of an organization
A poet, flesh-eater, I cry

I scream at him and threaten
That lovingly black lowly dog
Still am not left alone
So I whistle and tell that rogue

"I am a poet, please do care
I've come here to enjoy the moon
The river, the wildly flavour
So leave me alone, leave me soon"

Yet he doesn't care and barks
standing at the river bank
when I roll down onto the pebbles
of the river and my body is sunk.

So is he then a bodyguard of beauty
will he stand between me and moonlight
or when I steal an ecstasy
off the waves and river's might?

Or when I pick a flower
off the stillness of the tears
will he then stop me ever
will he not care what a poet is.

I may be a greedy flesh-hunting liar
But still a poet am I
When no one can, nobody dares
I can do, I can try –

To tear off the world off its bough
And then smell it and return
And replace it simply somehow
Doesn't he know that I, a poet can.

SENTIMENTALITY
POULOMI SENGUPTA

To drench my scarf, today is the day!
Let the lost afternoons come rushing by
Out of the navy-blue sky
And the sad beauty is amused
When the evening is infused.

When the time bomb burst in the classroom
And the seeds of golden flowers
Came floating to the home
I became lonely to lonelier soon.
The speeding scarf
Flows past the verdure bowers

And reaches the far side of the moon,
Oh! Immerse me in fairy tales only,
White-to-blue and blue-to-white,
Like a long poem I would flow
In a serpentine lane I would glow
Pursuing of sentimentality.

WHEN HOME BECOMES UNREAL

SUJIT SARKAR

The blind bat has lost the way,
Entering the room, circles and circles,
As light is off, comes out of cage
Gets lost in the sky and whistle.

So in the dark only the stars are real –
The world, the home of absurdity unfurl.

I AM OUT TO CONQUER THE WORLD

MANJUBHASH MITRA

Love, my Love, my dearest!
So lovely and small is your waste;
Could I pen you a love letter, dear,
My intimate present to you thus I offer,
I shall be off and away on the streets in the autumn,
Before the year is out and gone;

-A beautiful time to conquer the world;
Will you, won't you, come with me,
Go then and pack your bed-hold,
Love, charms and your feminine mystery;
Come, fly off with me, oh my lovely flower
Just in the middle of the day;
Shall I taste your seasoned flavour
Of painful emotions, shall I say?

As you will be round the globe, trotting
Touching people, seas and islands,
I take a novel rose-bud willing,
Imbibe a philosophy of Bengali sands.

My car speeds through the fir-avenue
I meditate absent-mindedly on you;
You a maiden beckoned me with light
But today m'lady, you're a different sight.
Mysterious are your ways and spell
Please accompany me when I travel.

Be beautiful though as crazy as a cyclone
Give me profound peace in the sojourn.
Let me in my books and books shower;
Give me also a forceful pen and power,
And flow of language as of a river
And lead me to the seas, oh my dear!

TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

PRAMOD BOSE

Happy with women and gold in the Century last,
We were, we were happy to the brim,
Our fuse was fused or bite was fast
Of this Century – not passed, not dim.

We were the subject written about,
Over-shadowed only by power that be.

Yet we had our beautiful feuds,
Love reciprocated, darkness glowing brightly.

Now is all artificial life and play
Robots will be turned into folk;
Lots of science crawl night and day,
Computer occupies chairs and we choke.

Plain was our standard, living was plain,
Love needed no bloody machine;
But now comfort chains – arrangement fine,
Though the lips are hungry, the kiss is slain.

THE ART OF SUICIDE

SWAPAN BARAN ACHARYA

Sleeping tablets
Or neck on the rail
Noose round the neck
Or under the car – hell!

But thinking of words
Is a surer art of death
Than those above; –
Confidential and private!

Thinking of water
Deeper and under
Shaping an image
Bereft of colour or flavour,

Amounts to a suicide
By drowning the self;
The question still remains,
Though the last one is safe.

What's wrong with
Noose, tab, rail or car?
'Cause, am afraid to die?
And life is so dear!

Better than continuous suicide!
Better than living underside!

THE HAND THAT MURDERED **DIBYENDU PALIT**

The murderer's hand
Is like a chameleon,
Changes colour then and now;
Is it healthy and bon?

Attains immortality,
History makes a hero.
Repeating performance
Mr. know-all is a zero.

His experience
Youth searching an album
Of his past innocence
Memory gives it a sham.

The muscles harden
In gradual burden
Both hands represent
What the hell it meant!

Understands certainly
What amount of change
Obliterates totally
A child's innocence.

Mercy, no never!
Give him the meaning
Which change dissipates
And a body rots philistine.

FEAR OF BEING LONELY

BISHNU DEY

A lonely stranger, a foreign traveller, am I
In this jungle of homo sapiens.
I talk straight, but my eyes
Are blocked by walls of nemesis.

Is it God's mistake that I am here
In this meeting place that is the world?
'Don't understand their cant dear,
A stray barbarian in Nature's boulevard.

The savage knows not and blunders on,
Stumbling reptiles with venomous hood,

Pervading fear of body and mind's attrition
Tremble and cogitate in water, on land.

And this is eternal for me!
Each day is unsatisfactory.
Each one faux pas savoir-faire;
Even night no exception;
Without any perception,
My heart neither here nor there.

A FAMILY OF RATNAKAR NIRENDRANATH CHAKRABORTY

Water – I shall accept;
But when the river is in spate
And floods the gates dangerously,
I won't – I won't accept then the responsibility.

Flower – I shall accept;
But when the plant
Becomes an adobe of termites,
I won't be responsible – and I am right.

Light – I shall accept;
But when the sun without any caveat
Burns all crops off the field,
Shall I be responsible? No, not a bit.

'Shall not be responsible
For any robbery cruel;

But when he, the son, brings forth wealth
Or becomes a sage by some magical stealth,

We shall then all crowd around him
And tell him in chorus euphemism:

"I am your father"

"I am your mother"

"I am your brother".

LET THE FLOWER BLOOM

ASHOK ROY CHOWDHURY

Far – far from the first and second world
In a virgin field of third world country
Beside rotten pond in a forsaken land
A young maiden cleans the utensils sultry
Let us christen her "Radha the beautiful".

Swans float around her feet
A street dog encircles her for some bite
Her face is serious
Like a priest reading scriptures
Her perfect breasts are open
Looks and caws a foolish chicken
Just a little while ago –
Father Gomez cycles from the field
And asks her, "How are you, child?"

The big socialistic and democratic noises
The Calcuttan and Alsatian poses

No one knows – no one to know
That a beauty is about to glow
The lotus is opening its petals
A rose will bloom out of the buds.

But she does not know
And she does not care
The third world is important
And only the multinationals dare –

To till all fallow lands
And to buy off the wares
They are all in a rush
To be the first to encash.

But then there is Father Gomez
And the fat street dog
To protect the image,
The flower, and the slog.

'Don't know. I won't know
How is it possible?
Are they not all quite vulnerable?
The progress of civilization
Is to be halted
It's quite a target
The flower is to be protected
The flower must bloom
With all her glory
And must not succumb
To the onslaught of civilization
The cancerous growth
Must escape the barbaric rot.

SUDDENLY ONCE DAY

SHAKTI CHATTOPADHYAY

Long since ages, 'have become inactive,
Inanimate, immovable, totally passive;
Devoid of vital force, or a trace of intention
To write a simple poem, – my passion.

No work for me now, and do I enjoy my leisure?
Long since inactive, knowing no pleasure.
A rock of idleness pressing on my body and senses.
How can I be unconcerned and obtain solace?

From perverse dreams, – while reading for knowledge?
Do I begin to enjoy trapped in a cage?
Long since in total idleness, yes I enjoy;
'Feel relieved that none will again annoy;
And I won't wake up again and dance,
And the remaining life will vanish suddenly once.

A REPORT

SWAPAN CHAKRABORTY

I must be destructive;
But before I become one
I want to be polite once more.
Although they are certainly, unjust,
I'd still like to fall at their feet
And tell them that hatred is bad, it hurts.

We too have some responsibility
Towards the rascals, who are encroaching our homeland.
We must go to the roots;
For example; before we serve bread to some one,
It is necessary to know,
If the bread will satisfy his hunger
Or will incense his anger;
Or else, let the water flow downward,
Taking its usual courses.
It is just not right and civilized
To push away the boat
And then request the guest:
“Won’t you stay on for another day, please?”

TO RIMBAUD
ACHYUT MONDAL

Every poem is an essay only
As tight breasts in a tight chemise,
Like through a breach flowing freely
Surge of water in swelling rise;

Like crookedness of the last sentence
Covered by opened up limits of sadness,
Like a pile of ageless collection
Getting lost in echoes of reverberation;

Who says it’s a lone bird on the bank of river?
Where are they? – The Ayeshas, the Akhtars?

Is immortality nothing? Why, where,
Cape of Good Hope and earthworms are rare? -

Heavenly liner of Da Gama Vasco,
Poetry is the creation of pirates – a frisco.
Harmad only makes waves and shrieks;
For they carry powder, and unwed slaves.
Bubble of emotion bursts like peace of ocean gurgles
Passes past easily raising white flag of peace.

Poetry sleeps not, alert like a night radar,
Vanquished the invisible armada and I shudder.

INNER VOICE

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

I look at the sky
And I see there is no space
The space and time are in a tie
The stars are speeding silent rays
And their quiet conference
And the quietude has no sense.

My mind is full of the infinite
And the need is urgent indeed
Divided and sub-divided is endless space
Crowded with an express seed.

My narrow life's voice is shrouded
Truth cannot be conveyed through ordinary words

Daily humdrum words are dead
Their meaning nothing or worse.

My words are unclear
Like an autumn's foggy morning
The rhythm is no-where
And the mind can never sing –
"I love", like a bright dawn
And with hesitation I bemoan,
The narrow throat is choked with emotion
Love is but a manifestation.

So I choose the forest;
And I come to it day after day;
And I want to have my words polished
'Midst its green and shadowy lay;
The new leaves cross the crowded branches;
Beat the silent sky in a comprehensive race;
The new leaves greet the sun
And meet the breeze in fun;
And the leaves get the hue
From the charm "I love you".

My curiosity takes me far,
The present is effaced clear;
The past stares my face,
Banished is pain in my sense;
The Heaven repeats the old theme:
"I love" – and it's sublime.

And then the night ended
And the rays will spread.
This old theme "I love"
In the sky up above;

When the world was made
Through the tidal, 't was said:
"I love" – the original rhyme;
That was the beginning of Time.

This message has made
In my mind a golden image
Of the bereaved sky
At the deserted high
Of the setting sea.

The day has ended
And darkness dead;
Worries and pains of life
Mixed in a dense conscious strife,
Like a lonely evening star
Be enlightened afar;
In the life's ultimate sound
"I love", – by love all is bound.

SEVEN STRINGS

JIBANANANDA DAS

Sarojini is lying here;
I am not aware that she is lying just here.
Rested enough; enough is enough;
Then she is gone into clouds in a huff.

It is no longer dark.
The light comes in waves in layers.

Sarojini is gone there – that far.
She used no ladder.
She is no bird; she had no feathers.

Down on earth she is geometrical waves,
The ghost of geometry proclaims:
“No, know not I.”
The yellow light is perched dry.
And lingers on the evening sky,
Like a lost kitten
With meaningless guile and beaten
And stupidly smiled
And that’s how she lay and beguiled.

AUTUMN

JIBANANANDA DAS

Autumn’s here
The wind is filled with a touch of coolness
Morning time
Dewlets sparkle on grassy crests
Amloki forest
Trembles all over as the heart beats
Rumour is
Time is near to drop the leaves
Twigs of shiuli
Full-of-buds Tagars are in bloom
Honey bees
Visit Malati creeper morn and noon
The sky has poured

And at the end, clouds are moving
With the breeze
There's no hurry floating and floating
The pond is full
Up to the brink, flowers at the hedge
Paddy saplings
Fill the field and dances with the breeze
Wherever I look
Golden fire I see the holidays
Forests with flowers
Holidays to worship the sun's rays.

“... ..”

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

I have known the unknown through You
'Have shelter in many a home, thank You.
The far is near, my friend, 'cause of You"
And a stranger is a friend through You.

When I leave my home and travel afar
And grip my thoughts of uncertainty and fear
I know, because I forget (alas!)
'Midst the unknown, You're the eternal near!

In life or death, the universe through
Take me wherever will You do
I know, You will introduce me to
One and all, my friend, my constant You.

When You I know, then where is the unknown?
No inhibition, not a shred of fear,
Ever awake, you have always shown;
My friend, must I not let You always, near?

THE FADING MAIDEN

UJJWAL SINHA

She fixed her sight far into the sky,
And made the meadow afire with stars.
The stars' light extinguished the flowers.
The naughty breeze kissed the girl nigh!

She loosened her locks free
The black engulfed the night
Her body shivered and never breathed in fright
As Chopin played on the piano key
She wore a far-away look.
For a bird to cross the hills anon
And present a dazzling dawn.
No bird of prey did, at her, look.

No dawn welcomed her with assurance.
The dew drop was lost in the grass.

I TELL THE TRUTH

RATAN MAITY

I am not lost, no!
I am just not available
That's all.
Don't think, I am no more
I have not deserted, not at all.

Still I toil against odds
I tell the truth to meet the lies
Nature needs me
God commands me
Man ponders me
You must be me
'Am for the creation to continue to rise.

Don't I know everything?
All that's happening?
I know, I know –
They raped Atasi, Rēbati and Shefali
Made Shyamal, Subhash, Satinath homeless and fling.

They wantonly fired upon
Innocent tribals
They are terrorizing the country side.
I know, I know all.

But I am sorry, 'cannot do a thing, until –
Yet I do not know warfare
I know only to stab from behind
Or make a home-made bomb
And hurl it aimlessly still.

But that's not enough
The enemy is much stronger
So I must do something.
But I am sorry, I cannot do a thing, until –

Until you get united
And you take me in
And may it be one by one
Come ye all and sing

Drops will build the ocean
Have faith
'am your leader,
Your commander
But 'shall appear
Only when you're ready, united, a-stir!

FRAGMENTATION

SHAKTI CHATTOPADHYAY

I am of four segments:
One is mine three are figments

Segment one:
I remain a mystery to all but none.

Segment two:
I fall in love, entangled, build a home anew.

Segment three:
I engage in falsehood,
And burn into aimless revelry.

Segment four:
I am adventurous, I dream,
I die, – achievements galore!

RELATIONSHIP

KRISHNA BOSE

All day long we accuse each other;
Inside and outside dusty everywhere;

I gather myself nearest to me,
And listen to my own music lonely.

Lonely I look myself in mirror
And shiver with secret happiness, dear.

Each makes thus one's own little pleasure,
And village and city alike fill in murmur.

Near or far you may be but, I am having a ball
Think, with next to nothing, I can buy all.

Whom do I want to buy? Or what want I most?
Lack of faith in my heart, doesn't it cost?

Why does the beggar woman sing at the crossing?
Right letter at wrong door, and who is crying?

MOURING

DHRUBA CHAKRABORTY

Millions stand in the dust
And groan on the grasses
The sun burns in the open
Black are the lengthening shadows
Inside the heavy rain lashes

The cosy room puts me to sleep
The hurricane keeps me awake at night
Wherever I go my return is strewn
With strange beckons from out of sight

I am not the only passer-by lonely and alone
Billions have gone by and shown the way
Flowers are thrown on all the streets empty
Who lights the fire on the river quay?

ON THE THRESHOLD

ANITA AGNIHOTRI

I stand on the precipice
I slept on the threshold at night
And then the dawn's ablutions.
Serve me my food here where I eat
Spray some fragrant essence
And spread on a little mat
See me in strange poses.
And am I not caught and sold
With my designer dress
Down and tangled with laughter on threshold?

I see from a distance
And sketch with a burnt piece of charcoal
Then I rub off the pictures.

Golden fingers on the cheeks and lips,
Poetry, oh! When will you admit me a bit?

WASHING MACHINE

DEBASISH BANDYOPADHYAY

Before dawn
Destination Calcutta
Six hundred and thirty eight washing machines
Coming from villages
Filling many a train
Coming in the rains
And in summer
And through wintry fog
Coming in groups
Getting down one by one,
Washing machines.

Walking and walking
Getting lost in the flats of the city
Washing utensils
Washing clothes
Mopping floors
Evening trains carrying back home
At the stations already dark
Cycle vans flat
But on foot
Then on foot
Three or five miles
Lonely walking the streets of the world,
The washing machines.

Ugly naked poverty waiting at home
Home? Happiness? Rest? Oh! Where?
“Die, die you may”.
“Get lost at the least.”
“Aren’t you ashamed saying so?”

"Can't kill you with my own hands
"Justice – justice!
"But I wish, you were dead."

Cruelty rests in the heart of homes
Where does it originate from?
Whose cruelty anyway?
Oh! Where are the homes?
The homes?
Do the washing machines know?

AN EXHIBITION OF REPTILES **ALOE RANJAN DASGUPTA**

All the roads of the city
Are now overflowing with visitors
At today's exhibition
Of strange and ancient reptiles
So there's so much curiosity and query
No entry for those who do not zigzag.

In the crowd there is one
An egoist climbing puffed up with pride
And again would rather turn into
Atleast a rattle snake indeed.

By his side a dismissed jobless manager
Almost like a dinosaur
If only a vegetarian one

(Brought lunch of boiled vegetables only)
Also the tiny reptile
Who during emergency
Wanted to lick me with his lascivious eyes.

How he looks at the booking office
With his tear-saddened eyes
And that crooked viper
Descendants of the British Empire
Expert in further fragmentation of the rest of India
Catalog in hand, looks clever though respectful.

Also look how an ancient
Corrupt inspector in gentleman's garb
Sheds crocodile tears
And reptile-style waits relaxed.

Since this dawn I am somewhat straight
So despite the ticket I bought
Paying hard-earned money
The doorman of the museum
Though did not have to throw me out
Just did eject me all the same.
I am grateful to him
Atleast he recognized me
A "man" – not another reptile.

AGREED

JASHODHARA ROY CHOWDHURY

Just tell me who inflicted pain on you
I would like digging out his skeleton
And make a cage out of it
And install in it an urn
Filled with milk, blood and water
Honey and other liquids
Which you may preserve
Like a bird does for a dark night.

And tell me who loved you
I would like to present him
The marrow of my bones
Torn out of my body
With colour and romance of pink –
Delicious. Or feed him on
The succour of my throat.

I shall wait just for his nod
Through a chink of the window
Where I shall set my eyes.
My eyes that are ferocious
And glowing with ancient pride,
The eyes may be already dim;
The little light that they still emit
Suffices to light up the chains
Which I blissfully forget so long.

Kind you are that you offered
That suffering on a plate
The offering had red sandal paste
Sacred leaves and force,

And in return, won't I do
Atleast this much for you?
Just tell me who wanted you.
I promise, never shall I
Blackmail you ever with his name.

BIRTHDAY SONG
RATHINDRA MAJUMDER

Water shrouds water.
What is swept off
What can it be
But the river of love?

Who is to be life's companion?
The whole day and whole night
Words, talking words, only words!
What kind of language,
Oh! What kind of life?

Hail the ever-changing sea.
Wake up
Let the brown bridal bed
Blossom with bountiful moon.

Current, oh current,
Give me your word.
In my worth-less desert-like heart
Out of wonderful rhythm of words

Let my poem
Be a song with your love.

Water torments water.
As life in the plants
Writhes out roots in the dark
As a song of new birth
Of dew drops at dawn.

THE COMING TEN YEARS

NIROD ROY

Assume, you will see nothing
In the next ten years.
Plugging your ears
You will hear nothing
In the next ten years.
You will conceal somewhere

The little 'you' that, though understand.
Or, when there's a devastating fire
You will let the wind take the cake
You'll not raise a hand but stand still
Near the dirty water-rake
As if you have seen nothing
And you will speak nothing
Nor will you hear anything
But you will sit idle
Behind the orphan's house till

Two in the morning
And you will pretend
You haven't seen the harried spouse.
Or, you will lecture on water
Near a desert dune;
But do nothing about it – and never care.

In the coming next ten years
Learn by heart the safest Bengali phrases:
“Didn't hear”.
“Don't know”
“Haven't seen”, yes yes.

Still when you see a man
Being heckled needlessly in the public
If then your chest is full of pain
Take two tablets of silence
And go to bed then.

Or if your hands shake suddenly
In front of a dead child's weeping mother
Think, you are incarcerated
And in a nightmare.

Alas! My poet,
To listen to your fiery words
There exist only the webbed spider
And snakes moulting
And half of Rabindranath revolting
On a torn calendar
And none else alive there!

THE NEWS

SHWETA CHAKRABORTY

I remember, you told me
When the fountain was flowing
That you never attained your ideal;
Life is thus for many amongst us going.

The artist creates a sculpture
On the sea-shore on an afternoon
Only to see it lost in the tide at night;
A boy of the tourist group scurries for it soon,
But finding none, starts crying,
The wise father with a toffee consoling.

Men play the snake and ladder game,
But only a woman understands at best
That the life is but a slate,
Wherefrom the names vanish again and again,
The lonely plastic slate doesn't burst open.

The girl is a dot pen, a flower of the grass,
A little foolish, a little sickly,
But simple at heart,
Knows the nature of autumnal rain surely;

Crying all the same,
Goes back into the kitchen,
Takes children to school
And returns home,
Basking in the afternoon sun.

ABOUT US

(Our relationship, our friendship)

SHAKTI CHATTOPADHYAY

God lives in water
One day I must do a crater –
To a puddle in the garden;
I must do it alone then.
My only objective is:
Nearby in water to make God handy.

He needs the peace of water too.
Living together long,
Men may fall out without a song.
But luckily God doesn't, as men may do;
Even if He is in the far-off garden;
Even the distancelessness will save our friendship, Amen!

FOR WHOM HAS HE COME?

SHAKTI CHATTOPADHYAY

The strange God stands in the earthy yard.
A heap of flowers in one corner;
In another, life itself locked in doors!
For whom has He come here?
Does anyone know any clear?

God sings a song!
He is tired walking in the streets;

His feet are dirty, –
The dancing feet.

Some blotches run in the crannies of consciousness.
Move a little and find a bunch of cotton,
And God cries alone!
Those, who cries in the assembled place
Pretend as people's friend,
By selling people's produces!
The flood delivers sand
For building cultures;
He who speaks thus, has never seen God.

My God stands at everybody's door.
A heap of flowers in one corner
In another, life is locked in doors.
For whom has He come?
Does anyone know for sure?

RAINBOW AND THE SEVEN MELODIES

NILANJAN MUKHOPADHYAY

Flavours of sleep in the flowers;
Three steps and four stairs;
Sonorous seventh symphony;
The background holds honey.

The author of "The Vedas"
And "The Route to Heaven" – authors,

It's about time, tell me straight
Whatever you know that about;
Kaleidoscope and colour-flow gate?

In a new class on my birth day
What is right – school, college, office? – say;
Michael and Vidyasagar debated that;
If orange light is incoherent.
She is the target, class-mate, her I dreamt.

Seven stairs, ten flights
Want to attain rail to heights.
The whole world trembled
Because of the bloody black 'ad'.

New class, new lessons overnight,
Sleepy flavor in orange light;
Vibgyor cover removed,
Three ladies then blind;

Leela, Aparna and Sarbojaya,
The last one to map my 'maya',
The three daughters painting,
"Route to Heaven" preserved
The melody, the flavour fainting.

ONLY ONCE
SANJAM PAL

Show me once only
The cocks catching the cawing hens
Jumping from behind, I see.

Show me the two dogs
Who submit, startled and ashamed
Still happy locked up dogs.

Show me the dancing peacock,
Crazy and cynosure of eyes and rock!

You must prove to me that
It's possible without a purse,
On the river front behind a mound of sand;
Everything is possible and that's that.

Prove that frozen blue lightning
Can pour rains tearing from sky,
Horizon to horizon splurging.

Show me what is possible with intellect;
Sohini and Mahiwal are fleeing
Crossing the Bias fro and fret.

You have to prove it to me,
Miles and miles of bicycles
But projects nowhere to see.

Show it to me, can you, will you?
The lady of the palanquin
Lifting the veil, crying for help and view.

Teach me, explain to me, Pompa,
Convince me, lead me to understand
Two thousand years have gone by
Still Vesuvius is far from dead and bland.

IN DARKNESS AS EVER

KAJORI BOSE

The day you were born,
You cried and sighed and were torn.

Milk bottle, a social marriage,
Ornamented, bride-gifted, dowry to manage,
Gifts ceremony, cooking, officing fourteen months a year;
Washing your hands off in the Ganges, pre-and post-natal over.

Your misery and your happiness, yes
Really happy? It's never been the case.

Jewellery, Sarees, hairpin and rice cooker.
But your savings yours? Never, never!
You are always in deepest of waters
But conceal you must your unhappy tears.
Your degree and your mathematics
You must sacrifice at a moment's notice.

You were your father's darling pet
To your husband, oh! Forget;

Mother disciplined with love and care
But mother-in-law with verbose arrow is there.

And alas! That's how you spend your life
What else can you expect, you but a wife?
Even after millions and millions of re-births
Himalayan dishonor is all that's your worth!

DIARY OF A DELHI-BOUND

SIBASISH MUKHOPADHYAY

Red Fort, Light and Sound

Light and sound will brush you off.
Dust off and rise, history is around you.
They will shriek, protest and ride
The horses, Nahabat fireworks, Dewani Khas view;
Sometimes Ajan, sometimes galata;
Looking in progress.

Sometime the history grinds to halt
With super-sonic quake.
The drivers will wake you and say,
“Thy limit is here, Lallu”.
Get down and see, the reality is cruel.
Turn the pages of history,
Write the next chapters,
Nadir Shah loots Delhi again.

The Poetry of New Delhi

Celebration is on,
Singing and dancing,
Bande- mataram,
Post- dinner jokes,
Fifty years are gone.
I had been saluting you
Since fifty years long,
Drive me not away, I appeal.
Tell me not, “Aren’t you ashamed?”

Today let me see a little,
How the rupee dances,
Beyond shame and hatred,
Forgetting money is important,
The figure is enchanting,
The flag is flying,
The heart is bleeding.

To the Girl I saw at Buland Gate of Fatehpur Sikri

If she be the gate,
Voluntarily, I am her keeper,
If she be a tourist,
I am her apologetic guide and saver.
Why did she have to climb
Fifty two steps at a stretch?
And panting, have to ask me,
"Brother where's the toilette?"?
Even she is a Bengalee, is she?
A tourist?
Is she a Bengalee? I see.
Does she meet the familiar faces
On the pages of history?
Does she not shiver?
Am I not the witness of mystery?

Tired I am, examining
Temples, mosques, morgues
And the whole of U.P.
Only today I find her and see.
And I am miserable.
Is she then Din-E-ELahi?

Agra Bazar

Afternoon disgorged off bus,
Entering tumultuous Agra Bazar rush,
Shoes, elephants, biriyani selling,
Lugagging hotel beckons; neglecting
The Yamuna banks, Yamuna laughing,
“Welcome Saheb”, Yamuna winking.
The wailing moon, the moonlight lush,
The unknown place, trembling lass,
Stoned life, Agra Fort in front,
Act one! Sixth scene! Jahanara won’t;
Won’t see, but in prison Shahjahan hushed!

On the Banks of Milk Stream

In my evening parade,
I am all alone,
I now think, even I said;
“All I knew so far,
“Nothing but sham!”

It is impossible for you
To do this,
As they are dolls of hue,
In books of rhymes,
Real and unreal kiss.

Dolls of cheese, made of moonlight,
Dry fruits’ circus;
The sun melts columns straight.
The Taj like boiling water
And that’s our progressive supper.

THE FOURTH UNIVERSE

KRITTIBAS ROY

Why envy the beauties you haven't seen?
Your eyes reflect candle-umbra.
Your breasts are just thrusting up.
Your ancient jealousy plugging you deep.
Why all this?

Instead let's go out for a stroll.
There may be some freshness outside.
May not be so sultry either.
Possibility also: – there's no wind.
The sky is dark.
The breeze not at all.

Better then go beyond the darkness
And walk the streets.
Al! Let me walk in the darkness!
Near or far, darkness or light!
It is but will-O-the-wisp.
Forget it, my darling dear,
Forget the beauties that you haven't seen!

UNDULATION WITHIN CIPHER
SANKHO GHOSH

Didn't I tell you -?
I thought I told you long ago.

Unmoved I stand before you,
And this is how I express –

Because there's no language
Better than this soundlessness.

Because there's no greater end
Than the disappearance of universe,

By the awakening of the body
In bodylessness.

Because the falling flowers,
The silvery ashes of creation,
The last of the speeding tramcars
– All of them wanted a shelter.

Didn't I tell you that?
Then why did the hibiscus bloom?
Looking down the edge of the pool?

Nothingness is the only thing you know?
Didn't you know the immense undulations
Deep within the nihil non-mass?

UNDERSTANDING

SANKHO GHOSH

One who writes
Understands nothing.

One who understands
Writes nothing.

They meet at times
At the edge of the roof
And consider if they should jump
Down over the meaninglessness.

IMPLORATION

SHAKTI CHATTOPADHYAY

At the time of my departure
Ask me, "How did it all happen?
"Would you like to go to get a pebble
From road side? You might!"

I didn't have, then, flower, dear
The fluttering flow of love.
Still how can I give you one,
When the gardens - *the nothing, have?*

I would lead you to river front;
There, seeing you, all will shiver.
But where's the time to wipe the fear?

To drown down my fateful defeat,
Return I will not, never to you.
Every one said, "Come whenever you like;
"In so and so month, ten times a year"
And you said to me, "Welcome;
"Do please come, all your work be damned".

BROTHER'S CEREMONY

JOY GOSWAMI

Rakhi tied on hand
You are brother and sister
A moment's weakness
Mind not mind together.

Now you are sister
I am your brother
A fable of ancient time
Forget not, master.

The moon is up, blooms the flower
Birds chirping on trees
I forget the mistakes
And put hand on fire.

Uncommon fire
The fire is not common
You've put your hand once
Twice never, never!

SPRING FESTIVAL

JOY GOSWAMI

When the blind rain lashes at light,
All the evenings beyond memory –
Accompany upto the river front –
The spring festival has arrived in a hurry.

When the blind rain lashes at the light
I tread the path bedecked with grass
I possess in hand all the lasting past
The sun lights up the future distance.

When the blind rain lashes at the light
Comes along a river from Bengal
And says, "Since when are you here?
"Could I not meet you in your room single?"

After the room, – the sky, bent like a bow
A bridge of the colour of fire
Time beyond memory here and there
Oh poet, when do you live where?

Oh the blind man, I am the rain
Approaching and following the light
I lost direction in the grass-decked path
I crossed the bridge beyond memory
Now I am the sun in future sight.

BATH

JOY GOSWAMI

Hesitatingly I declare today,
I want to be enamoured once:
I have looked from a distance,
Never disclosed until date,
So far I never had courage
To be rolling in any fountain;
And today I see, bye and bye
I am crossing the bathing time.

I know, you expected
Only a thief of a man.
Once a lover promised
To take you to the flowers.
And left you there and his words
Entangled in your hair
Like a necklace of bones.

If I tell you, I have come
To beg of you the right
To tear off the necklace,
If I tell you, I am that man,
Look, for whom you have
Preserved the romantic
And virgin Yamuna so far.

Listen, I am a night bird.
Even my wings are burnt
But never do I disclose this
To this very civilization.
I have spent the youth sick and sour
And the charm is yet to be off;
I have alone seen the genesis of flower.

At the bed side of the departed,
The desert I have kept awake at night,
As I would inform the idea of moonlight
To the young lady blind from birth.
Look! The desert night
Signals through eyes.
If you have understood,
Then charm the deaf poet.
If he hesitates,
Then stand before the public
And make him blind
And pour all your incomplete kisses
On his blunt eyes.
And let the world see
You have benumbed
The civilized passers-by
And are bathing in the open fountain
With the mad bard.

SONNET # 85

SHAKTI CHATTOPADHYAY

I will love in a natural way.
I hold your hands; speak slowly, –
Making my ears curious.
Put on an intelligent smile
And a little sarcasm together.
Eyes to wink, you are not –
In the rain or airtight chamber!

You exist and continue to linger
On memorable Madhabi creepers
And nowhere else, nowhere.
Whenever you are in front of me
Most naturally I do not follow the mystery!

Forget the afternoon flicker, the fan-tailed cows,
Forget our selected beloved, oh Sambar!
Oh! Sambar! Forget the old fans
And the horses like air-planes
And the elephant-rider on the stirrup.
Forget everything, oh Sambar, but ME.
I have loved everyone just naturally.

LOVE COMES ON SILENT FEET

SHAKTI CHATTOPADHYAY

Love had come, crossing the threshold, on silent feet.
There was no darkness within the room or without.
There was light, it was good and stout.
Something unexpected; there was a man waiting for it.

Love had come, crossing the door, on silent feet.
Like a reptile or fragrance or a fault at heart.
Like nothing important after that,
Tearing through fields and forest a bit at last.
Even a man ages.
Embankment of the stream of enjoyment collapses.
Termites, bacteria invade bodies, doors and timber in any case.

The joints break; the splendid stone gives way.
Shelters are destroyed all by quakes of old love retreat.
Those that are ended and the way they do sway
Break up into splinters everything on the way.
All love comes in, crossing the door, on silent feet.

THE FEMALE IS THE LOSER

“.....”

The maiden looked at the distant sky,
Flowers bloomed in the park, so did the stars,
The starry light dropped petals off flowers,
The misguided breeze kissed the girl shy.

The maiden pulled off her hairs loose.
The black of the night mingled with hair.
Her body reverberated all over,
As a sonnet off a piano does ooze.

The maiden stared away afar.
Wished the bird crossed the mountaint.
And fetched a glittering sky at dawn.
The savage bird didn't even bother.

The maiden was gone at dawn in fear
Like a dew drop dried up in the air.

BALMIKI

MANJUSH DASGUPTA

Call me not now, not yet to you.
The whole body covered in an ant hill.
The greedy have finished with time.
The clock of death ticks until.

'Don't know when in the (Baichi) thorny bush
The heart is pierced by a hairpin;
The hurt mouth starts a crazy fount,
I know, you know, not 'a crazy sin.

Lubi-chobi, jo, tem, tia, mo I say.
Languages of the world help my lunacy
But never did I express in Bengali
"Ami tomake khub bhalobasi".

Horizon to horizon the saffron seal.
Even that is covered in endless ant hill.

I DON'T WANT TO WRITE ABOUT FLOWERS
ALOKE RANJAN DASGUPTA

Mausumi's plants bloomed kadamba
At least thrice this year.
If I quit, saying nothing about it
It will not be fair.
Meanwhile two warring factions of Ireland

A random collection of Bengali poems 83

Will pact for some time;
And ten poets of new generation
Will announce a grand new rhyme;
Still I engage, on the plants, my mind.

And I observe,
Only one season is bent upon returning!
The more the season is strengthening,
Rounding up Brojo Bhasha,
From Mira Bai to Keshab Dasa,
The more angry are the other seasons.
Still, is hit thrice by rains, Mausumi's garden,
The bloom, the kadamba flowers.
Again Vidyapati flashes lightning with his pen.
Comes the torrential rain.
Peace, peace everywhere
And is there any need to write again?

I UNDERSTAND

SUBHASH MUKHOPADHYAY

I am leaving –
Here, just here, –
Going out of reach!

I leave very carefully
With silent steps
In the darkness pitch.

While leaving, I see
The meeting hall is full;
Every one is there.

Only now I understand
How I get
Such thunderous applause
From the audience I met.

A COUPLE IN BRONZE
ALOKE RANJAN DASGUPTA

On the way back from Zurich
I stand by the lake, broken-hearted
Again I see the Bronze Couple,
By Henry Moore, smiley-lips parted.

Those two, – the King and Queen
Having been standing through the ages,
Banished from their own country;
With rusted knees, in revolving cages.

I see the sea-hawks fluttering over.
– Discretely, – not because of respect to the throne,
But because the couple dear
Was created by Henry Moore alone!

MISSING

ARABINDO GUHA

How I wish, one day -- at least once I could
Look at the beautiful stream,
Self, resting on a towel,
Spread over the soft lawn
Under the shade of a tree, well!

The tree is there with its shade,
The grasses are and they are soft;
All are arranged on the river side;
But I forgot the towel, alas!
I have to come then again, right?

Today I have got the towel;
But where is the river?
If I did not see with my own eyes,
Never could I have believed it --
That the stream with all that tumbling water --
Is missing! Just isn't there the prize!

Another day, the river was there, though,
But where are the grasses, the tree or its shade?
I wonder, how these are all missing
In but a moment, so silently evade!

Still another day, when everything is there, --
Shady tree, soft grasses, self-evident river,
All those, which could vanish in a moment
And return, have they all come back here?

I wish, I could stare at the learned stream,
Self, reclining on a towel, spread on the lawn tender,

Under the tree-shade! But, how could I?
Whom, 'am afraid, 'am missing? A dream?

AN AUSPICIOUS BEGINNING

SUDHINDRA NATH DUTTA

In a lonely corner of the black forest
On the flowery lawn
I meditate
To create a song befitting your taste.
The golden autumn flashes in view,
The breeze kisses the flowers anew,
The dusk, the sun is set,
The leaves are masked and wet,
The sickly morn peeps fire,
Like sandal paste spot on higher,
With charmed eyes
And glued ears
To create the song – I wait in tears.

With tears in the mind's alley
The ancient city wet and grey
Jealous and ghastly
Shrouding the Nature's play in mystery
Whispering complaints disturbing chemistry
I ask the name and the history.

No answer, not even partly,
Who are they? back drop floating,

No answer to my asking.
The rains keep pouring sadly.

Demon or god comes of nothing
Gazes at my face once
And vanishes excoriating,
Are they not but mystery of despair?
Still the god suggests you to compare,
Their symbol is sickle and hammer,
Harvests burnt, standards looted,
A standing deity of 'NO!' boasted,
The dumb scripture says such a thing,
With rapt attention, looking.

Methinks at times I know
The beauty written with lightning
As in a Chinese canto, a painting
Even in Spain gestures are so
Company of painted union, - no.
Beyond selfish luxury there
Enters a stranger – a battalion
Lost in the dusk in China or Spain
I know, I know them even so here.

Even they loved just like me
The infinite field, the reigning sky
The word-struck stars on the high.
Initiated, obeying the flow of ordinary
They sought after the unity
Saturated in the heavens, a pity
Saluting branches of the tree
Imagining they got it in the white body.
The city was served poison
Even they are just like me.

The spider webs spread in the sky
The time-witnessed ridicules heaped upon the bee.
No one can escape the inevitable.
The bee-hive burns in the ghastly rubble
The moment's hero's arrow dispels the rubbish so
The blind flies fly off with a flourish
The universe is tangled with time, though.

So, accidents invade our engrossed tryst
In silent neglect
By the hint at the gate.
The deceived humans point finger
At the invisible hunter in grief linger.
I understand, I understand not
What the eye-less eyes want.
Do they incite in sacrifice or promise a stint?
They seek revenge
Provide consolation in our abode-less tryst.

First, get back her own rights
Or face up the rotten corpses,
Filling the cities and fields.
The father is worthless, it seems.
The mother-earth is clinging to the strong
And immersed in violence, – wrong.
Still no sage
Will shed the strong's blood and bathe
To establish a heaven on this earth.
So, you must join, in your own strength,
The frenzied and destructive dance of purification rites.

DAWN

[Translated by PADMA SACHDEV from original in Dogri]

It is dawn;
Or, an yogi emerging from a trance;
Or, may be,
The day melts in the evening,
Or, – or, –
A bride in palanquin passing by.
Does a nightingale sing?–
Does a child laugh?
Or, is perhaps a passer by speaking
The Dogri language?

WATER

PADMA SACHDEV

I love
Deep wells,
Tanks with still water,
And lakes,
Whose water
Is like spotless mirror,
And reflect only truth
Who hide their own face.

SIXTH SYMPHONY

SEBANTI GHOSH

Five feet apart- I was; –
And it made little difference.
When we are together,
Also means nothing to us.
The bubble is a globe without a hole;
The apparent solidity of eggs is unreal
They have infinite number of tiny punctures;
We breathe in the air,
Which is invisible;
Just like all this,
This symphony flows down;
Up and gets drowned;
Gets entangled, leaving no gap.

Hope, now you understand –
How the rain-soaked, lotus-petalled
-Lips brought happiness.
Holding hands, chin sinking in water,
Then rotten mud and mosses
And white flower buds –
Making the bed for the new-serious coyness.
Before snatching off from the beaks of tiny fishes,
You could never make out –
That the taste of beauty is so sour!

Before you know,
The serpents' sixth symphony
Gets enmeshed in the baby-astringent hot saliva,
Which Bach called lovingly
"The poison plant"!

RETURN

KANAK THAKUR

Parted the sky with both hands,
Floated out the children of light laughingly,
The space is sprinkled with droplets of life, silly!
I return to my own existence.
The wind opens up the eyes.
I look out in all directions and see –
I exist as all else.

DISSOLVING

SRIJIB

Lips entangle at Amita's sensitive moment.
The lazy evening dawns on her body.
Soft wings cling to the rigid arms bent as if onto branches.
Thus the story moves forward in the depth of trapeze
The ripples observe the full moon surface.

THE TAINTED MOON

ASIM DAS

I wonder, how will be my day,
If I appear before you! –
If the cat crosses the road; –
Or, say, I behold a yellow-beaked
Black bird, called “Shalikh”; –
Or, look at the sun at eclipse time;
Or, see the tainted fourth-day moon
On a ‘Bhadra’ night –
This earth is for –
Every thing it has;
All the plants and trees, birds
And winged ones;
Bacteria, insects, animals and
All the living things;
Even for us, the men, the intellectuals.

Whenever I feel like –
Seeing you and touching you a little,
Hearing your voice,
It dawns on me that –
I am again natural or subdued flat
And am coming along the light breeze.

I believe if I appear before you,
The whole world is mine again in my view.

KITE, ALAS!

JIBANANANDA DAS

Kite, golden-winged kite, alas!
On this wet cloudy day
Beg, cry not, just fly by
The 'Dhansiri' way.
Her sad eyes like cane fruits
The melodious cry.
With her beauty as of the loveliest princess,
She is gone, she did die!

Why call her again?
Who would like digging the heart?

To awaken the pain?
Kite, golden-winged kite, alas!
On this moist cloudy day
By this 'Dhansiri',
'beg, don't, anymore, cry.

WAITING

SUKANTO BHOWMIK

The road awaits in eagerness
The right travellers feet,
Which will have to be decorated
With time's time-less anklet.

But the waiting may be long.
Hundreds or a millennium strong.

Still the road is ever awake
To welcome her, the right traveller
Silently eager for her sake

He will decorate her feet at rest,
(With) Time's time-less jingle-set.

CONJUGAL
SEEMA JANA

The girl is garrulous,
Has many things to say.
When the world is serious,
That's silence! Hey!
You select the word
And am wordless.
You perform rituals
And I burn as incense.

INFATUATION

NAYAN ROY

The boat afloat on tears
The distance omens falling stars
The spoilt are under trial
Darkness is bound behind bars.

'Am a sinking ship in treacherous water
Whenever I come near, you remove your hand
still vanquished you are, Sir, you won't command!

Frankly, Sir, your trick is over
You cheat, would you like to see the poet's might?
It's I who write, as this is my real war
Dear reader, (I know) my rhymes are just stunt and tight.

But think not, it's nothing but fraud,
My fingers produce rhymes of life,
Alphabets swim in my blood,
And love-songs float in my breast.
I take pains for my friend and life's open chest.

The murmur of the streams is for my bell,
The birds are chirping only for me,
May be, my life is a petty tale,
But all the roads bend just seeking me.

Oh my enemy! Oh my friend!
Every one's mine, you see,
Peons and postmen knock at my door
Looking daily for me.

THE SEA-HAWK
JIBANANANDA DAS

Oh my sea-hawk,
Only for a moment, you and I,
On the sun-baked ocean's lap,
Let us lie,
Leaving the Malabar hill-top,
Climb the window
At yonder distant hop
And the Tarantella dances mystify.
While quite on the shore –
I look out and verify
The snow-white wings in the sky,
Dancing frost greeting the world
Joyously by!

The dusky chorus of the peaks are away,
The night's gone,
Your songs do sway,
Again creating a new sea,
Dazzling sun and life greasy,
On this tired earth,
Your songs invite waves
Off the depth of mountainous path.

Don't know, ages are gone by,
Many a kingdom dead,
Much of golden paddy is wasted
Didn't you know, 'm afraid?
The present sings sadly in my heart
Are the children of suffering just part?
Wishes, thoughts, dreams and pains
Future and present

Many of the losses have made us sad
We have lost the gesture of joy.

I know, I know, white bird,
You're the offspring of Malabar foam,
Never turn your back, you have no past,
Nor memory nor form,
No sad sculpture on your breast;
You suffer not on dew-drenched nest
Like many a bird,
No lowly dawn for you
With dreams soaked in blood
No low land, nor quarry
But injury behind every happiness.
Oh sea-hawks!
You form the Malabar-sky's necklace.

Never did you dream, (leaving the roads)
All the oceans of the world
In the opposite island in the fairy's mirror
Meet a beauty who is so sad
Whose life's but a line
Of an imminent story in the evening,
Waves of the river shine,
Her hair is gloomy, eyes dark and clear
Like the Hijal forest
Dream her once, dear
And the lights of the world aren't at rest.

There the honey no more,
The flies do not soar,
The Salikh's mind
Full of flavour of yellow foliage,
The clouds mourn

The golden kites' passage
By the Dhansiri river, alas!
The noon-lit clouds in the high
None on the grasses of the earth
And none else in the sky.

You are not familiar with stillness
Or the blood-soaked way
In the dust of the earth's decadence,
Even now the face of Kanchi-Bidisha
Drifting like a day
You know not, beauty hides the hand
In the dark hungry clog,
Man can only wish to insist
Upon the rainbow in the sky,
Like the end of the tired day
In the autumn mist.

You do not know them
In wingy joy of your coral cage
White bubble babies accompany
White wings' image
Like Heliotropes in the noon's infinite sky
White wings shine in the sun
Like snow flakes die.
Still know you not
Of dreams and thoughts of mundane nigh.

When, – when were you born
In the nest of fluttering reeds
And left the arrogant earth
And journeyed in fleets
For the Arab and China seas
And the festivity of Indian ocean

Tearing off all the labours and
Untiring perplexity vespers
Flow all the way to the blue bias and urn.

Paddy's kernel, the tender autumn of the earth,
The beauteous women of the world
And the love's mirth
And their sad lonely faces,
And life like dried-up grasses,
You will not know, never all this trash
But will fly off tumultuously
Like hundred cool suns cool'ly
Ignoring the eternal sun's brilliance
With your stunning stance.

THE HORSE

JIBANANANDA DAS

We are not dead yet; still
Sceneries are born all the days;
Mahim's horses feed grass meal
Autumn field lit by moon's rays.

All the stone age horses
Still loved to graze.
Dynamore of the earth's faces
Oh boy! How it is strange!

The scent of the stable flashes,
Crowded in the evening rays,
It's the steel-made machine clashes
Flattering in the useless hays.

Tea cups, like the sleepy kitten,
Caught by the dog, – tyrant,
Are in motion yonder- hidden
In the cosy pice- restaurant.

The paraffin lamp blows off pale
In the rotund-shape stable
Time's sigh
Touches the Neolith hale;
Moon-light reflects the reflectable.

BONANI DAS
APURBA ROY

Waves of desire in body language
Day and night – the body wants
The rhythm of a galloping horse's rage –
Blithe and petit Bonani Das.

Curling locks fire flies
Disheveled hair in stormy rush
Love dawns in the evening skies
Binds locks in the greenish lush.

The face shivers in light and darkness
Time out, life filled with happenings
Walked the steps atop the lonely nest
Tasting the hot sun's blindings.

Far and past the fairy days
Now in old home, – all-around walls.
On the tank-bund, where the end plays –
(with) blithe and petit Bonani Das.

EASY TEXT

DEBASISH MUKHOPADHYAY

My night, when rains fell;
My collyrium – dusky morn;
My dark-hill tunnel;
My first flower torn.

My anklet floods the mind;
My fluttering peacock plumes;
My forest cried blind;
My games of crazy days' tunes.

My tin-roof has holes;
My room a-splash with water;
My straws are all that I hold
Mine the Damodar's surfer.

Yours is the drenched body field;
Mine is love's comfort-read.

UNEQUAL

SUBRATA MUKHOPADHYAY

The eternal story of Ram;
Ram and Sita hit the road
For votes and it's sham.
Shall accept worship
Shall accept offering
And vote for Ram; it is the urging.
Which means:
The war is inevitable, – since.

ILLUSION OF THE EARTH

PARTHA GHOSH DASTIDAR

A tiny sleepy town.
A yellow house in the outskirts.
'INFATUATION' – its name.
Many a day in dusky light
One could see in the terrace bursts rise to
A tender lass with golden eyes.

A vast red-soil dusty road
Runs in front of the house, sad
On the other side of the road
Stands a still-eyed lad.

Long, long past that time
The lad is plus-fifty now.

On an eighth-night of the Puja time.
In the crowded din of the pandal's bow
He saw in the light of the chandelier
The same very eyes in the eyes of the Goddess.

Two days later,
Midst the tenth-day puja –
Night drum beats,
The same eyes float away
In the water of the Ganges' twists
Those very same sad eyes
Still looking wistfully into the sky!

BEGGAR

ARNAB PANDA

My arms outstretched seeking poetry.
Only a touch fulfills my pity.
Oh! My packaged paddy sprouts!
Oh! My dream-scouts!
Short-lived was my father.
(so) Leaving the skirts of my mother,-
I crossed the rivers.
The summer bruised my feet;
And that's how my life I meet;
Tottering and diverse
I wake up in water, –
In the midst of beauty I wonder.
Complain to no one about my hunger.

SIR

TILOTTAMA BOSE

I salute to misery.
'Wish,' could touch!
My sir is he.
Sad visage, soiled shirt;
Sir is here to teach me.
We're face to face –
In the hurricane twilight -;
I do sums nonstop, –
Not a single right!

Grayish specks compassionate
Rights the mistakes.
Pat on my back, 'bye bye',
My salute to sadness!

I wish even today –
Could call out, 'sir, you may'.

TORN

SEBANTI GHOSH

How much to come back?
How much can one return?
As a lonely bird returned to its nest
In an adventurous turn.

How much to give,
So as to leave and go with ease?
As a river puts out its tongues
Into the land and shores and crease.

Is it what is called leaving?
Two tender wings grieve;
As one plants a flower plant
Into a flower- vase and forgive!

IN THE FOREST LANE

SEBANTI GHOSH

You couldn't take the decision
And I took the wrong one
Exchanging life in this tea-shop!
Which brings us to the forest lane.

This is the very fearless forest
No wild elephants,
Only domesticated swines.

Look, your Girl's school awaits you
And my son on my cell queue.
You're passing on the tea cup silently though
With salted biscuits only in tow.

What else can you do,
I mean, to you, to some child's father?
And me, some other child's mother?

ME AND OLEANDER FLOWER

BENOY MOJUMDER

Work over/ normal sleep
Descends a shadow verily
Me and Oleander/ sleep together
Embracing each other wantonly
On the sky's breast/ light and shade embrace
Each other variantly
All the rays of the stars/ assemble together
In halo and harmony
Like love-lorn thoughts/ like pure sacred thoughts/ openly.

Work over/ normal sleep
Descends like a shadow

Me and Oleander/ sleep together
Arms twine arms ado
During danger in thoughts/ better and safer to think off
All these portents and screaming.
Then will love/ time, sky, fire/ start gleaming.

SOME SPECTACLES

RATNESWAR HAZRA

The sky is a linocut picture in that field.
Clouds do not play today.
The evening is peeping in the
Bamboo grove, in the garden of the householder.

The ghost of the crematorium
Looks for clandestine darkness.
A desperate horse enters the picture of the West.
The rider is in a blue short.
Some such spectacles and some other
Eye-cornea break through sceneries.
Seeing that the clever rain breaks rules
And wipes off signs of the road.

At the scent of the flowers' rushes
In search of source,
Crossing the pollen's pit.
(scent is like a butterfly – the butterfly flies off to her
lover's nest.)
Likewise, parts of the cloud

Trickles off the linocut picture.
Still the cloud knows the alphabet
– knows to speak.
– knows which spectacle
Breaks from the eye's cornea
And runs into the picture.
And at dawn goes to a village –
The lovers' nest
And his blue shirt flies off.

ON HAPPENESS AND SORROW

SANTOSH CHAKRABORTI

Happiness – you can buy;
Sorrow – not so easily got.
Sorrow is nobody's slave;

Happiness – you can arrest,
Sorrow – halts so easily not;
Sorrow is nobody's die-at-will crave.

Happiness – you can paint,
Sorrow – not so easily embellished;
It will rather re-locate your wave.

Happiness – you can break;
Sorrow – not so easily erased,
Still stay on to destroy and degrade.

ROWS OF SHEEP

SAJAL BANDYOPADHYAY

Everything is just like this
Coffee in a cup
Sugar in spoon
Fire in a pipe
Buttons on shirts and pants
And big – big steps.

Just like this
Small small feet knock at the door
Rattle of a bar
Rustle of sarees
Take out the mask
Wash all stains in water.

Just like that
Curry with roti
Mosquito net with bed
There after
There after one
Then one more
Then one more.

One row
One more row
One more row
One more – one more
One more
Row.

TO PROMISE

BRATO CHAKRABORTI

Soumen is afraid to draw a line
Sourin picks up a bit of future
With his finger-nail; –
Is doubtful, on throwing off
With a strong finger push;
Soumen narrates in soft voice
Stories of time's surgery.

Both of them have no picture of victory in their blood-
To enable one to glue onto the other's existence, – no hesitation;
But both are strong while serving each other
With perfect skill.

One frees oneself and his mate by shattering shackles.

NOT LIKE FLOWERS

SADHANA MUKHOPADHYAY

Do not – with me –
– behave like a flower!
In my body, urine and stool are,
There is spittle, there is phlegm.
All the elements that are in the body
Of the prostitute of a market place;
All those are prominently present in my body – no less.
You need not therefore, in vain,

Try to apply any tenderness – that's insane!
Those of the dark bushes,
That look a romantic scene
you must know there is none
Of true hidden mystery therein.
If you think like flower for nothing,
After the great dream,
You will be miserable, acting.
So just smile naturally,
Accept my appetite and thirst easily.
And if suddenly,
More than formally
Comes something,
That itself would be an extraordinary gain;
But won't promise in advance.

PRAYER OF THE ASHES OF LOVE-GOD

SAMAR SEN

The long mast-pole in the horizon,
Strange sound of the ship,
Floats in from the far-off sea;
– a sad sailor's song.

The whole of the day
Spent like a bad dream;
Intimate love-making at night;
Incarceration by flowers.
How many days, how slow, a long day!

How dusk-intoxicated darkness,
How many nights of honeymoon
did I spend in pleasure!

Today oh! Grant me life in Death!
Floating in from the far-off sea;
– a sad sailor's song.

A SICKLE **DINESH DAS**

The bayonet might be very sharp,
Let me have the sickle, my friend,
Shells and bombs may be rough,
Sharpen the sickle, friend!

Didn't you love intensely
Curved moon's white slice?
This is no moon's century,
Sickle in the moon – no vice!

Whoever yesterday filled the earth,
With iron and steel fist,
Guns' and guns' knocks hushed,
themselves are demolished.

Powdered the earth of steel,
With the sea of your blood,
Eroded and decomposed in the kill,
Lofty is the age of the soil first!

Soil looms in the horizon menacing!
Here it comes, look at it first!
Have you sharpened the sickle fine?
Of the soil, the sickle the friend?

THE OMNISCIENT
ALOE RANJAN DASGUPTA

We two from two different worlds,
Are translating a poem of a foreign language
For the benefit of our father.

Our father is aging,
as everyone ages usually;
we two are also aging
and gaining experience.

According to our individual experiences,
our individual translations
differed from each other's.

Our omniscient father's experience is still more;
He is not rejecting
any of our two differing meanings.
He is constructing his own and a third essay,
Which is nearest to the original.

RESETTLEMENT

SANKHO GHOSH

Whatever were there around me:

– grasses – stones – reptiles – ruins of temple;

Whatever were there surrounding me:

– exile – alphabets – lonely sunset;

Whatever were there surrounding me:

– land slip – bows, arrows – spears – dwelling houses –

– all trembling, pointing towards the West –

– all together simultaneously;

Memory is like a long sojourn; –

– a group, a crowd.

The violated box is left behind

Under the shadow of mango tree.

Leaving one step, on the other step, –

Suddenly all are refugees.

Whatever I have around me:

– Sealdah – midday – grafiteed walls,

Whatever I have around me:

– blind lanes – slogans – monument.

Whatever I have around me:

– beds of arrows – lamppost – red Ganga,

All simultaneously immersed

In the dark chamber of bone marrow;

Music water ripples sound midst all this;

– Howrah Bridge lifts up, zero on top;

Under the feet flows on traditional –

Whatever around me is: spring –

– flying hairs – naked roads – gesture of flames.

Whatever surround me are transparent:
– sound of mornings- bathed bodies –
– the Mahadeb of the crematorium.
Whatever surround me: are death
– one by one – day by day – thousands of days/birthdays.

All together return to my memory;
In dim light are crouching all beggars.
Whatever I had and whatever I have
– these two stones strike
and light the daily routine of resettlement.

LIKE JATIN BAGCHI'S MOON

DAUD HAIDER

Jatin Bagchi's moon left the bamboo bush
And climbed our roof's cornice
It comes like that at times,
When there's no light – vanish!
At that time,
There is moon-light's twin hide-and-seek
With river's wrinkled ripples.
At that time,
There is as if celebration and play
In every field – giggles.
As if,
Ms Mallika Sarabhai
With her symbolic rhythm of fingers
Shatters the sky of all the stars

And the killer-roses corrupt
Wanton despotism.
It's not Jatin Bagchi's moon, either,
Actually I wanted to see two love-birds together;
And I scoured all the lanes
And by-lanes of the world,
And it's a cataclysm!
Once I was returning from Bhubaneswar,
Suddenly I jumped out at
Rupnarayan river's shores;
Wanted to see personally
If all the perishable water is true;
But seeing the birds' flesh and
Foot-marks of men of prey,
I had to come back and withdrew!
I was returning;
It's dark like mother's womb,
Dense mist everywhere – like a tomb
Tearing the dewy screen
I start for the east,
And the pupils of my eyes reflected, –
Like Jatin Bagchi's moon,
A lady, named Arundhati – exists
But then all the doors of my room
Are wide open
No!
Never came the twin love-birds that side.

CONTINUOUS

SNEHALATA CHATTOPADHYAY

Even that thing is not confessed that way;
I don't know, why the hesitation to express;
Still I could not forget the flitting day,
In a moment of weak memory in excess.

Lonely wilderness, rich with birds' chirping,
By Kankana the river, I remember best,
On first meet, hand in each other's; kissing
In controlled passion, you said, "won't forget".

Night is deep; river banks in motion;
Stars of cosmos observe every bit;
Somehow somewhere passion-soaked perception,
Finds its shelter in life's throbbing beat.

The eternal equity with dazzling consciousness
In mind's blossom, flowers pulsating,
Scents of Ambrosia in memory's silence
Floats ceaseless in lonesome home-coming.

So I say, what I didn't say earlier,
Even in gestures, my eyes never betrayed;
Whom my heart accepted secretly, dear!
How it matters, if now impatiently said?
Jewels dazzle, your crown ornate;
Don't you remember the night and the river?
Is it so easy for the life to forget
When soul is sold for a loan of the giver?

Matter of fact, never thought, what I want;
It's an idea, still in blink-less secrets.

If you ever again happen to demand,
Then, first, let's steal two drops of tears.

SEA-CRADLE

BUDDHADEB BOSE

Would you remember the tiny room, Surangana?
Would you, would you remember?

All day and night long,
Wind and storm,
The blue sky trickles through the window, –
– the sea cradle!

All day and night long,
The force of the waves
Mary – go – round,
The sky is drunk,
Windows open;
Horizon to horizon,
The sea is full to the brim;
-the dance of the waves!

All day and night long,
Thousands of waves thundering,
Blind and foolish wind of the storm,
How it makes topsy – turvy
Racing around in the tiny room!

would you remember?
Would you remember?

In the dark midnight
Sawn with a saw
The fractured moon is back
'midst the densely crowded
Stark stars,
Violating!
The moon returned silently
During the narrow night,
Inflicting tides on the bosom of the sea,
Sucking you and me
Into the blind bottomless tide;
Would you remember?

You and me freckled with how-proud a sun!
How many kisses of the days
Drawn to efface,
How many babies of the light
Have been beaten with laughter,
In that tiny room,
Surangana!
Would you remember?

The blue sky trickles through the window
All day and night cradle of waves,
All over the sea;
All days and nights,
Windows are open
In the deafening sound
Of the truant winds
With fever of hot waves
Of furious tide,

How topsy-turvy beat-around
In this tiny room!
Would you remember,
Surangana?
Would you remember?

In thousands of storms
In yours and mine blood,
With endless seas' hot fever of waves,
Would you remember?
Would you remember?

How many dead moons
Have we brought back
By the end of the night,
How many baby-suns
Have we beaten laughing;
We have floated down
The blind bottomless
In frequent kisses,
Would you remember?
Surangana,
Would you remember?

THOSE WHO LOVE
MANAS CHAKRABORTY

Those who love,
For them on Jhau leaves,
I leave the rains,
And sun-shine on flame trees.

Sometime in Neolith December
Alongside a fire-place
Sitting face – to – face with someone – say
I am that rain – I saw the rain
Saw the flame – trees' sway
And the inevitable sun
that – that very sun
Aha!
Alas! Even that sun is gone!

OPPOSITES
WRITTICK TRIPATHI

1
Hidden under the earth
Pretensions and opposition
Witnessed by cloud's messenger.

Friendship is intense between opposites
– also self – recreation,
As tall Sal and Segun trees,

Parallel and combating,
Getting drenched in the Sraban;
– Only colourful moonlight in between
And only the shadows in – between.

In expectation, pregnant flowers blossom
Predecessor Malati,
The past-charmer Lopamudra,
The only other beauty beside.
Oh! My darling country-side,

With all the fear and modified paddy,
Back – to – back abused and polluted,
Hurt and devastated,
Hurt prose-pieces by hundreds
Degenerate into poetry.

2

The cunning dove and domesticated tiger
Put up mosquito-net together.
Long – long ago Divya Bharati
Lapped up flagrant blossoms,
As was found today under a tree.

All the wise men are busy
Deciphering the palm – line fate
Of long – disappeared Jaideb.

In fact, opposites ensure –
Deep friendship,
Self-recreation, ... galore.

ANOTHER POEM OF JIBANANANDA

[*STYLE: RUPOSI BANGLA*]

Life or death in the eyes,
The grasses of this Bengal on my breast,
Their horses are still in the dark,
They stride onward, breaking the grasses,
These very grasses;

'Midst the grasses
Live Kankabati, Shankhamala,
Along with smell of their bodies,
With plaits of their hair,
With Champa-flavoured fragrance,
Hair well- groomed under the grasses.

When Hijal leaves drop
On the white yard
In Gaud-Bengals' autumn afternoon,
When the swan floats
On the tired water of the pond,
I keep lying on the body of the grasses.
And the Shalik dries her tender yellow feet on them.

Under these green grasses,
Wet dust lingers,
The blue drone off the veranda blooms,
Rub their glass-wings
On these grasses.

As a damsel, from the Karabi,
Tears off a flower,
Milk trickles on the grasses
– tender and churned!

EQUALITY

KAZI NAZRUL ISLAM

I sing songs of Equality.
Where everything –
Obstruction, differences and all –
Vanish; Hindus and Buddhists,
Muslims, Christians are all in one roll.
I sing songs of Equality.

Who are you? Parsi, Jain, Jew, Bhil, Garo, Santal?
Confucian? Follower of Charbak?
Tell me all.
Friend, whatever you are, please recall;
You might carry in your head,
Belly or shoulders –
Koran, Puran, Vedas,
Bible, Tripitak or Vedant,
Zendbesta, Granth-Sahab –
Read all you want.

But why this futile exercise?
Is your brain bombed?
Is it a shop for haggling?
Don't you see fresh blooms on roads?
You have in you all the books
All-time knowledge.
Look into your heart, friend,
To find all sayings of the sages.
All faiths are within you, –
All the great Saints.
Your heart is the golden temple,
Wherein the God haunts.

Why look for God the Lord
'Midst where secret books repose?
While laughs He, in secret disguise
Within your own Ambrosia-heart?

O, MY DAUGHTER
SAMIRAN GHOSH

Put the flower in your hair,
Now turn a little;
Stand still;
Let me see one side of your face,
Over the black mane of flying hair
— A small beautiful flower.

The corner of your eyes sings now,
With deeply brushed collyrium
On your lips stagger
A moon-touched burn.
In your bosom is the wind
Of seven seas and thirteen rivers,
Which stitch with lover's needle
A brilliant tapestry of tears.

The fasting girl dreamt
From her seat near the hearth,
As suddenly sleep was off,
A sweet but fateful dream took birth,
Jumped a seedling fish in a pond.

No daughter,
You see, such a dream, better not!

Now sharp walls of insignificance
Surround you and all around;
O, my daughter, forget now
Even you too had a pet name once!

SPEAKING ABOUT SELF **RAHMAN WAHID**

Radha – Krishna – a myth!
Has anyone seen them with
One's own three eyes?
I too know, it's an imaginary,
Distant galaxy!
You will never be my Radha!

I live on dreams, immersed
In the newmoon,
'Have built fault-less sculptures;
'Shall leave this world,
Looking at them only –

What do you want Denmohur?
Shall I lay my head
Under the train?
Shall I catch fire with my fingers?
Shall I dream my poems with inglorious?

Take this moon – hill,
Be endless; allow me to lower
My head in prayers;
You know, happiness is my disease!
I burn myself with splinters and crackers;
You are not guilty in anyway!
Needle me, needle me!
There are demons in my mind's jungle;
Scatter seeds of hatred for me
In your heart's tuberoses;
It will be easier then
To drink hemlock.

TO MARQUEZ
SEBANTI GHOSH

Fearless cheeks
Their plain wings
Through the fragrant bushes and creepers
The train speeds on
Wiping off disconnected flavour of
Heaps of gardenia and wild camellia
With myths of revelry of heaving birds
And dragons
In the fair of the buffalo-fight
Under the chocolate-animals
and decorated flowers-gates
chicken-legs stuffed with
boiled potato and swine's yellow fat –

this pre-colonial royal prison
and its Corinthian
sculptured blue eyes
scuttling the supremacy
and depth of youth
which has crossed
the bright cages of
earthy-skinned girls'
flower-bedecked runs
moves on the slippery jetties
to those gun-powder-packed days
of the pleasure trip with
monotony of mandolin and Gondola
of the powerful markets
pickled in basil olive,
where at any moment
beauty vanishes yielding revolution,
at any time the flames of tender fire splinters
gobbles up a military coup –
any day all these spectacles will wither away
as a picture post card
and the portraits of the ruler
will retaliate in fire
at balconies
in offices
in palaces
with salutation
with salutation...

LETTER TO A LOVER

SRIJATO

I exist, but not here,
Decrepit, though infirm, –
To me life declares
Rain drops in window – balm.

Four decades beyond the sill,
Not much of sun as such,
Only the fists – a hard kill
Who knows who can it catch?

So there, come here, come,
Everything is scattered,
Evenings know my room,
Now night is much better.

'Am calm, normally calm
But if the storm barges in
With fiery feathers' balm
Eyes open rains charging,

'Don't like room's decor,
'Wish 'am lost in the streets,
In life I die thousands encore,
Repair life bits by bits.

'Wish to wet my body
'Wish to flee anywhere
'Wish 'am quiet and steady
'Wish 'am a bit vulgar.

'Want very much to have you,
You under that umbrella;
That man's dude view
That crudely cruel fellow!

He does capture you
And throw you to the limit,
Road's round view,
Limits are the spirit.

One or two of those magic's
Habits free the fingers;
See, I open my fists –
The night is my neighbour.

My bickerings with you
Are teasing, – love and sadness,
Whatever's your home-view,
That's my rain dictates.

At every turn of the current refrain,
'Will see you much in this role;
Fire bird burns its frame,
The thinking remains whole.

Sometimes we don't meet,
Tho' daily we 're together;
You're lonely in the crowded street
Like a bridge on the river.

Much we know in one life,
In one meet many births,
Love – god in autumn strife,
Who will spare the lover's mirth?

The feel of living
Is eternal? Is seasonal?
Perhaps again in a new being
You'll, with me, in love enthrall.

FOR ALL THE PEOPLE

TAPAN AIN

Let all the trees be sandalwood plants.
Let all women's navels be musk – deer's
Let the moon light shine on the entire forest
Let God be there amid all the people.
Let all the gods,
Along side paddy seedlings,
Run at the siren hoot
Let all the homeless get back their smiles
Let all the people enjoy at a picnic.
Let there be a piece of Haldi river fish
On every rice plate.

SMOKY DESIRE TO WIN

NILANJAN MUKHOPADHYAY

In Jibanananda, in this water
In meat-smell, in many a consumer,
One day, once, in corporeal fasting,
'beauteous bengal', in foot-to-foot touching,
Who is the company – the old swine? –
Holding his hand in smoky lusting?

Churned the folk-lore of mystery,
Smearing, then wiping the paint of beauty,
Innocence in shirt and skirt,
In the land of cane fruit, jam and hijal,

In fasting mixes the conceit and all;
Show must go on in clap stick and mirth.

Never could I tell a truth either;
These two eyes are the debtors
To wish to win over Jibanananda's wrath,
My body became her property,

As if I have forgotten what a woman is;
Why does the sailor at ferry ghat die of thirst?

WE TWO STRADDLE
SAKTI CHATTOPADHYAY

Under the umbrella, we two straddle,
It rains at midnight.
The moon dries the petticoat and all
Under the sky in soft moon light.

Under the umbrella, we two straddle –
In the middle of night.
I tell the storm fresh and fickle,
“Well or not, we are all right.”

Why don't you shake and jolt the Bakul tree?
Five friends would accept five flowers;
Take them, drop them – until you are free.
Will-o-the-wisp suspect in the bowers.

Under the umbrella, we two straddle –
In the middle of night.
I tell the storm fresh and fickle
“Well or not, we are all right”.

AN EXPERIENCE

BUDDHADEB BOSE

Red light, white flicker,
Nothing to be afraid of,
Why hesitate, why sob?
Only a stop and halt,
Neither here, nor thither,
The serpentine procession, unmoved – thicker.

A flock of ferocious gigantic beasts,
Frozen by some magical tricks,
Momentarily rest
On a storm-drunk afternoon-haste.

Advances cautiously,
Listens to murmurs
Of nerves shattering
Trembling of motors,
Where Park Street and
Chowringhee cross.
The rumbling friction
Of steel sinews,

May way-back home,
The afternoon – muse.

Only a moment,
And the earth convulses.
The animals are free
Ground under-feet collapses.
The violent, enormous
Devastating deluge and fiery mass!

The traffic roars
The wheels belch jealous foam
Exhalation of hot torrid flame
Smothering the façade
The blind double-decker beast.

Alarm sends down
Tremors on the heart;
Below the knees
The feet are paralysed;
Their existence was announced
By a shrill, metallic, clamouring sound.

Only a moment
And it's the death
In Chowringee
Our darling Calcutta met.
The big city brandished
A scarf in the sky,
At heaving noontime
A far-off horn-cry;
The cloudy, green breeze kissed me high.
One moment
Then this is how he lives,

Like a spark of shivering
Tram-car wire-strings.
Like a tree trembling
In slow agreement,
Like a bird off to a –
Distance in fragment,
Like azure peeping,
Unblemished in-agreement teaming.

“The accused is ready,
“If that’s what you want.
“Everyone has written,
“Remember that.
“The last light,
“The service of the last nurse,
“The airy cheeks, not worse,
“Soft, colourful, round attain,
“The last wave’s in the mind’s brain”.

“I” am melting
With one and all
In the frozen fantastic flood-ball.
The taxi speeds
Towards endlessness
With spoiled sack of chemicals.
Slowly appears,
Sights a torrential effulgence.
A certain shore
From beside an ocean,
Brings a stupendous welcome
On the much-punctured
Raft of Columbus.
The virgin’s pretext of ‘Hi’ – absurd!
An embrace in the taxi a-stir!

Dazzling jewellery,
Dug out of the pyramid,
The head, body and arms
All came out whole and neat.
Blow conch-shell,
Living things bottom-up,
In the undulating brains of a man,
All quietly shut-up.

Signs on both sides
Shops, placards, abodes
Ladies old
Lascivicious bitches crude
The wind with swarming vermin's say
"I am living and well, hey!"

Thereafter, the continuing life
Familiar bylanes, unknown
Voluntary gold of Tutenkheim
Glow and blows, all gone!
The spark of tramcar wire swipe!

Everything in its place,
And a daily routine,
No sign of celebration of victory,
As in death, so in living
The splendors of pyramid
Are personal and secret indeed!

I too am present,
Do you not agree?
In the end, all witness,
Isn't the truism you carry?
The crowd in the Kino,

The percolating sun,
The compressed breeze,
The warmth of lazy tan,
Twin-breast laden,
And this debt, endless wait,
Tell me, are they not all sound?
And also echo of the same heart?

The foolish tree sways,
Its top in agreement.
The sunlight vanishes,
Unknowing coalescence.
The azure stares,
Dumb in agreement.
The crowd is deaf,
Like a picture in consent.
The enormous universe
Here and everywhere.
The colossal sky vanishes,
Then horizon tantalizes,
In the kernel perhaps
The falling leaf hangs here.
One soul, no goal – all nebulous!

GEN-NEXT

MANDAKRANTA SEN

Life is a liquid coloured fest.
News reach there late –
Of those who die in hordes in haste.
We're lucky, they aren't our mates!

Bombs and bullets are the bloody fate, they know,
They have to die, – they are going to.
We will live longer – we a few, –
Smart, cheerful, we will live through!

Raw bodies every corner, dead but just;
Wind up the glass, friend, let speed be ninety;
No one can overtake, we're so fast,
Fleeing 'will reach somewhere, a certainty!

The entire city is breaking up behind,
We are through to safety through the highway;
Can't you hear our stereo – Bhangra grind?
Siren sounds, bombing sky, all by the way!

DESIRE

BIPLAB CHATTOPADHYAY

I am one of those millions and zillions of bubbles.
I add colour to this world canvas.
Ingrained in me is the desire to see my beloved

Also to feel the warmth of her embrace.
The feel of our familiarity lingers on.
Or perhaps I am a labourer
Of that aboriginal world.
My fear, my devotion are both momentary
And mortal.
And permanent are only the immovable pyramid
And the inscriptions of love.
I am also like one of the creepers on the banian tree
Of that original forest,
Or, the power of the centuries-old sphinxes,
Or, a romantic longing of the prehistoric ages.

Whatever is of this universe is mine – all mine.
Mine, – and only mine!

PREPARATION TIME

MANAN DAS

This is the time for preparation.
Break the soil with utmost care.
Rains are coming.
Rains are coming.
Rains are coming.

You do not know the mystery of germination.
You are not that powerful to create saplings out of seed
You can only transplant saplings on the ploughed field.
The rest; – who creates all that is remaining?

Break the soil with utmost care.
Sow the seeds.
Rains are coming.
Rains are coming.
Rains are coming.

A CHILD'S TEXT

MALLIKA SENGUPTA

Sankhomala, Ratnamala in gran'ma's bag.
Oh! Where's Champak Kumar? – catch – catch.

Ghana-da, Teni-da are all too- too old,
Far from children's mind hundred-miles fold.

Kaka Babus and Santus do not any more –
Go to jungles and mounts at call of Masaimore.

Let there be happenings complicated, gorgeous.
Bengali kids want newer heroes in a rush.

If there's new geography and complex mystery,
New minds may still tolerate the old-history.

Apu of Nischindipur is extremely helpless.
Children's mind wishes – Bengal globalises.

No more trains today, they have seen the planes.
Plane-load of pungent Potters welcome, it rains.

The child says buy me: Hing Tring Tring.
The magic of Harry Potter of Madam Rowling.

ATTAINMENT

NABANEETA DEB SEN

Now, you got yourself!
You kept your crown of youth, the golden spectre,
Under the ocean of time,
You paid in hard cash for the game played with blood!
You could never get back self in pricelessness.

You have finished home-making at other's door-step.
Now build your own home.
Now, re-constructing yourself with own hands --
Proudly steal the 'Saree' of fate.

He may be concealed somewhere
He may not come through prayers.
To trap him,
Lay your traps.

I AM THE POET
PREMENDRA MITRA

I am the poet of all the black smiths and copper smiths,
Of carpenters, baggage-carriers and mazdurs,
I am the poet of all the vulgar men.
I am a poet, brother, of labour and sweat.
Luxury and laziness are for mind's dreams, brother!
I have no time, alas!

Soil wants, brother, the strike of plough,
The sea desires rudders,
Minerals are imprisoned in the depth.
Are crying and waiting for workers.
The turbulent rivers cry for building of a bridge.
To see the world's beauty in laziness,
I have no time, alas!

I turn the potter's wheel –
To fulfill the soil's desire.
I spread wings of rashness –
And make and spread at the call of the sky.
I build the ambitious sky-scraping minarets,
I show arrogant fingers at the earth's secret hopes.
I am the poet, brother, of black smiths and copper smiths,
And of carpenters and labourers;
– I am the poet of all the lowly men!

WHEN ARE YOU COMING?

PURNENDU PATRI

All the doors are open,
On all the trees hung the letters of invitation,
The sky is very near the river, at an intimate kiss,
Shining in the sun's rays,
Tell me, when are you coming?
Time is flowing out, – late, it's getting.

The stale flowers are withering in the garden,
Walking up gorgeously are all the other men,
To attend a festival afar,
Do you need time still more?
Today is a sanctimonious moment
In every house, are relatives and guests.

Casting off old clothes, new garments-clad,
The young are duly dressed up,
I don't care, if you know,
In a vacuum, I am alone.
The fly of indifference plies on my chest.
Whatever is found in the discourse best, –
– Are unstable in water!
Tell me, coming? – when are you!

A SONG OF A JOBLESS

BIRENDRA CHATTOPADHYAY

How does it matter, if the sky has dark clouds in Autumn?
The autumn sun is overpowered by fading clouds of the rains.
If wind roars in Autumn or a swarm of locusts invade,
If untimely cold derides in villages, farms, markets and
hutments,

How does it harm, friend?
Let us tie the shoe laces carefully at the patched shoe's end.
How does it matter, if the port dies and ashes are charred!
If the hungry mothers of dead infants – would in every home
remember?

If the shout of 'nothing is there' enter the verses and deceive
the learned,
Or, if the artists' dreams of skeletons of thousands of infants'
end,
That does not alter our days, friend!
The ripped shoes are impudent! Tie well the laces' mend.

How does it matter, if the moon dies in shame, peeping in the
room?
Or, if the naked woman hangs from ceiling,- would-be poets be
doomed?
Or, if the sea swells and roars and sends out warnings of thaw,
Or, if the minister's sleep snaps and the hack-men go abroad in
thaw?

Do these end our progress?
Sharp nails, patched shoes – write many essays!

TO A FALLEN WOMAN
SATYENDRA NATH DATTA

Don't you, Don't you agitate!
Why hesitate? I am your poet.
As long as the sun does not forsake you,
I will not give you up too!

As long as, seeing you, overflow the rivers,
The plants in the woods would murmur;
Till then my message would ring –
– For you and my heart would sing.

Lady, we shall meet again, I promise;
Make yourself worthy of me,
Be patient, 'is not a very hard advice,
'Shall be back in this route, you will see.

I am a poet, I wander in dreams of the world,
'Am not a rascal, still 'love my love-tryst;
Keep well and remember me, lady, again,
Farewell for today, and accept my ovation.

TO MY DEAREST
SUKANTO BHATTACHARYA

I am the watchman at the border
Crossing many a bloody road
Today 'am here halting
At the border of my own land.

From gray Tunisia to cool Italy
Like star-appointed fate
Irrepressible, unvanquished, rifle in hand
From France, in my neighbouring Burma too.

Now, my body is covered in a soldier's rough uniform
In hand, still, an invincible rifle
The unbearable pride of victory and strength in my blood-waves
Today, right now, I am the watch-man of the border.

Today the blue sky invites me
My county's wind has borne the urging
Has opened the letter before my eyes:

* * * *

I have fought a lot for others
Now the war is for you and me
If you ask, what did I get from such wars?
The answer is:

There was victory in Tunisia
Got friendship of the people of Italy
From France, learnt the charms of freedom
Harmless Burma gave me –
– The urge to home-coming.

I am like that street-light lighter
Who lights the roads all the way
Still he has no money to light his own home
There is frozen, unbearable darkness in his own home!

A WOMAN FROM DARBHANGA DISTRICT
SUNIL GANGOPADHYAY

Holding the railings of Howrah Bridge
Stands at the edge, lowering her head,
A fresh woman from Darbhanga District,
Water deep under the bridge, no shadows there,
But a gigantic heavenly mist
Camouflages from the disturbed areas of Calcutta,
Pauses at the terrace of the centre of civilization,
The entire sky pours off history's –
– sins-washing sadness,
Gradually all the sight, roads, people are off,
Leaving only in the centre –
– The red-flowers-printed-saree-rolled-in figurine,
A devastated picture of union of lines and space – .

Suddenly, she turns around,
That chief twisted woman,
Shakes her anklets,
Shouts out, “Ee: re-re-re-re”, as if thrashing a buffalo,
The mist attacks the protruding, –
– Red-chilly-like nipples of her slippery breasts;
She shows her butts with sound of creation,

Between her thighs – like Acropolis pillars, –
The distressed wing stops –
Near her wild-flower- smelling origin,
She lifts her robust hands
And again shouts, “Ee: re-re-re-re”;
At the moment, the creation kneels –
– Near the calamity.

At that moment, trustlessness –
– Gets paid for freedom of self from sadness.

Only that woman from Darbhanga stands there still!
Because at the moment, she is dreaming of –
– Thrashing a buffalo!

WHEN I WAS ROMANTIC

PINAKI THAKUR

1. LOVE PLAY

Did you stop last night? Did you dream?
Did I sleep last night? Were there any waves?

Last night, playful, two closed rooms,
We sat, we rose, blasting (whatever happens) our love-play.

Clanged and clanked –
On the floor of the district hospital, –
DDT, cats, saline.
Did the woman, through the windows, bite your nipples?

2. CANDLE-LIGHTED VISITORS' ROOM

Train from Bilaspur returns to Chandni Town.
Smokes in the air. Heavy. Chowringhee's original women.
Darkness in history. Slaves and Traitors.
Ishwar Chandra in a meeting. Rabindra Tagore on a Calendar.

History finished. No one will know ever,
Who gets what, to whom, in the candle-lighted visitors' room.
Tanned in the sun, drenched in the rain, in saline sea breeze,
Dawn returns to the city in the evening.

Now, now only –
Conceal your kisses, hide you bite in the cardigan.

CANNOT BE WIPED OFF **BIPLAB CHATTOPADHYAY**

Escapes a civilized fox
Out of the African forest.
Fiercely sharp nails of its every paw
Can cause death to domestic men.
The pots of the sacred life are under attack –
By the seed of man-eating creepers.
Sky's infinite cage is ready
For the chain-breaking free-willed parakeets of the New Age.

And it is also true that:
Even when the poet stops writing poetry –

The tears of the negro slave girl
Cannot be wiped off!

THE PRESENT-WORLDBLY
TASLIMA NASREEN

Be off – the moon!
Sodium – lamp is on!
I stand under the street lamp – post,
'Shall accept kisses legally.
'Shall trim on this life's sawmill
Body's entire forestry.

There's nuclear smoke in the air,
'Shall fill lungs with immortality,
With plants and animals – planet to planet,
'Shall pass time scientifically.

Development, – it seems, only development today?
Dinosaurs are extinct.
Let's shake off the chains of body and mind.
Let's live scientifically.

A DOWNPOUR

PANKAJ SAHA

A man's dialogue with another man:
Particles of moonlight fall on their words.
Aroma of rice mixes with their words.
Blood splashes on their words.
A man's dialogue with another man.

A man seeks the face of another man.
A man's face scans faces of thousands.
A man sees the images of his own on another's face.
Thousands look for self-image in one another.
A man searches for his own image.

He talks with another.
Words stagnate behind his words.
One speaks with the other
Particles of morning rays and night's darkness
Pour on his words.
Their messages are lost in his words.

SHOWER OF METEORITES

ARUN MITRA

Saw a star falling,
Into a narrow drainage beside my home,
Another fell a few days back;
If it goes on like this, – finish!

The sky will be empty.
The more I think, the more worried am I.
So dazzling were they once, scattered over the sky!
All said, – a dazzling display.
If the lode star falls also, it is the end!
Not the sky alone, even the earth will cry.
Who will show the way then, like the President?

It pains, thinking of the destitute sky.
Still, 'am a bit happy too, –
There's no prestige of my home, –
Now it will come:
I shall lift them all out of the drains,
Clean and shine them and place them on the floor of my room.

After that let all the sky be extinguished,
And see the beauty of stars of my home!

BAIKUNTHA PARUI
AMITAVA DASGUPTA

Looking at the shallow pump
Baikuntha Parui danced in joy.
Like chicks of chicken, he too has lot of children.
Now will they be stout!
When Luxmi (paddy) is garnered in the granary,
Wife will not fail to beget more!
Only a red cow from Odlabari market place –
And overcoming the whining milk-filled nipples, –

Squeeze out a bucket full of nutritious milk, –
Looking at the shallow pump, dreamt Baikuntha Parui –
All these blue dreams systematically.

Think, – no harm thinking, –
Eating pilau, why hesitate putting more ghee in?
Here'll come deep tubewell, now comes shallow.
Dams'll be built, killing the river of sorrow.

And laugh aloud, flying into the air –
The land-thief, paddy-thief, water-thief crooks – not so far!

Understanding none of these,
The foolish, simple farmer,
Unconscious of what kind of Heaven,
Had named his son Baikuntha Parui!

PASSION OF SIMPLICITY

SATYENDRA NATH DATTA

I want the smell, flowers bestow, losing, still, nothing, –
Its bottomless and bodyless being.
I want what I get from afar,
I want only the sweet bewitching air,
I want, in my mind, beauty's amorphous feeling;
The giver loses nothing; for me extreme blessing.

'Won't like tearing off, – sorrow I won't cause;
Simple love, simple joy, let heart repose.

'Won't like digging the earth,
In it, everything's mixed since birth.
'Want to get the gold of touch-stone touch
'Won't harm anyone, though fulfilling much.

I CAN OFFER

ASHIS SANYAL

Now, I am prepared, –
If you want, –
To give all, let my heart be breaking,
Can get for you from sandalwood forest –
The wished-for beautiful offering.

If you want –
The golden flower of the Nandan Hill,
'Will offer – unhesitatingly.
Before I leave at the end of the day,
'Can give heart's utmost caring.

I'll empty everything,
If you want,
And will offer ocean's corals – endless,
Dismantling all failures,
Of the hated chains of out-stretching darkness.

Before I leave at the end of the day,
'Will offer:
Emptying myself fully all my savings,

Now I am prepared,
If you want,
To offer infinity's infinite blessings.

“WHO WILL TELL ME WHO IS THE POET?”

SIDDHESWAR SEN

“I shall stand or fall by myself...

A man's style is the reflection of his mind...”

(From MADHU'S letter to his friend Gourdas Basak).

When did you fix the definition of New Birth,
In the Purans, would you remember?

Is that why Lankesh is not so abominable, any more?
As Ram's younger brother Laxman, – to rescue Sita, –
Secretively entered the Nikumbhila Yagna house,
On the beach of the ocean with turbulent waves,
For killing Meghnad in a terrific face-to-face war...
All that has happened, did happen and is happening even now!

Because, you were the future of New Poetry, –
The ‘Bhagirath’ to awaken Ganga flow –
Eternally into a poetic domain.
You were the stylist, – the artist,
... “Varieties of jewels in the store-house of Bengal” –
[MADHU]
Discovered in you only, – our attention is demanded, –
“In which people of Goud will be intoxicated

In wit and humour, in tragedy too", [MADHU]
"To drink ambrosia continuously from the MADHU-believe"! [MADHU]
You broke the chain of rhymes
And opened up into blank verse
In the pattern of epics
Of Valmiki, Vyas, Virgil, Milton and Dante
And also in the Sonnets of Petrarch
In classical unison
In the terminal points of measure.

We get you in complex metres too,
A poet, an original modernist, –
An Odysseus of Homer, –
In years that fierce pace of adventure
In Bengal of neo resurrection, –

(The heritage of your age is of our age too –
In spread and in mentality –)
"Who will tell me who is the poet?" Tell me Michael,
Who is but "death-conquering"? –
Is the definition real today?
True, in this Century!
In the century's twin purposes? –
In value? In creation?

MADHU – The great 19th century pioneering Bengali Poet, Michael Madhusudan Dutt.

BRIDE

BITASHOK BHATTACHARYA

Such breeze! – comes back.
The windows of the bath room shake.
Waves are spent again, – black!
Foams, – dark again!
Your fear is like this!
If there is ‘Salgram’ in the rock, ...
If there is conch in the shell ...!
How you hope!
Someone rocks the fullness of the moon
From darkness,
Some one ends his songs of peace and harmony;
Fruits germinate seeds –
Or, perhaps leaves fall off –
Making sound, – alone!

A POEM ON POETRY

NABARUN BHATTACHARYA

The poem which rejects the cowards,
Is the cowardest of the poems.

Poetry assures not the man,
Whose ground slips under his feet;
Never will he get back the ground.

The poem which does not burn like fire
Before the cold-stricken, scared, startled old dogs,
Better it burns itself.

I proclaim clearly!
This is my poem –
On poetry!

WAKE UP

KABIRUL ISLAM

The language off the lips makes noise.
So, learn to learn the language of the heart.
He, who makes art of foam on the beach, –
He is no ordinary type, – try to understand, –
This has been happening since time began;
Somebody must be understanding you,
Some not ...

Again, the foot prints of foam waves,
Like the image of your face, – smiles;

When the language off the lips stops,
Let the heart awake.

A LOVE POEM
SUBODH SARKAR

I stretch my palms in your darkness,
No gold coin on hand,
Dawn descends with light.

I stretch my palm in your darkness,
Night, you may speak now,
Night holds one of my hands.

Night and darkness,
Both alike, but no!
They two are twins, – lonely!

I stretch my palm in your darkness.
Don't you desire that I touch you?
You need me, – like salt!

I don't like any more, how many more?
I've out-stretched my palm in the dark;
Lay your heart on my palm.

I will save you from fire, rain and lightning.
Don't blame me –
I will sing – the rains, – the autumns!

AN AFTERWORD

A book of poetry and an Afterword – oh what an oddity!

Although poetry and message of poetry are universal, still every poem has something particular to say and say it in a unique manner, it has a story to narrate, has a point of view, an idea and at times has a protest to make.

Poems may be on a particular subject; countless poems have been written and is still being written in all languages of the world since its birth on “LOVE”; but they don’t repeat themselves. They are different not only in content but in structure too. Innumerable aspects are there to unfold on any one subject. The poet knows, how he would express in a unique fashion. It comes naturally to him; nothing synthetic about it, except when it is bound by chains of rhythm, rhyme, or rules of prosody; even then, in spite of everything, poetry is normally unadulterated and inspired and shakes off all shackles to express itself.

Every poem is a commitment; it captures the mind of the poetry-lovers and never let them alone. Powerful poets are those whose creation lingers on, – rhyme or no rhyme; obeying the prosodic rules or without.

When a speaker speaks, he has many disadvantages. He has to speak within a time-span, during which he has to hold the attention of the audience also. After ending his speech, he has rarely any chance to edit, to shorten, to elaborate or even to add. This is no less the reason that the speaker, more often than not, never likes to end his speech, thinking he should still have to add something more! In addition, the speaker has to speak facing directly the “WOLVES” (the audience)!

Contrastingly, the writer or the poet has many advantages. He edits, carries out extensive corrections, adds footnotes, writes introductions/prefaces and postscripts/epilogues.

In case of the great Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy, he had to re-write his great magnum opus "War and Peace" many times all over – all by hand!

In case of the famous Irish satirist playwright George Bernard Shaw, he wrote pages after pages of prefaces, prologues, epilogues and postscripts for each of his plays. He even did not forget to give detailed stage directions including introduction, costumes, entry-and-exit instructions for the dramatis personae, not excluding writing the music!

Other mundane writers/poets also have added advantage of "book launches", "adding gleanings from reviews", "praises for the book" etc through the Publishing Houses. The writer/poet has another advantage of not having to face the "WOLVES" (the readers) directly! Normally like Meghnad, he fights, postulates, moralizes, criticizes, satirizes – all from behind the safe veil as of a "Cloud" – i.e. from a distance. He has another distinct advantage. He sometimes organizes a "Foreword" written by an eminent person to add prestige to his project.

However, inspite of all these, it is not always so hunky-dory and honey all the way for the writers or poets. The writer or poet has to commit on "hard discs" and non-erasable hard copies. Unlike a speaker, he has no escape-route; he is easily trapped. He would be prosecuted for plagiarizing, or even if his own thought was original or simultaneous – like, in scientific field – simultaneous, but independent invention of radio transmission by Jagadish Bose and Guglielmo Marconi.

In any literature in the world, I believe, poetry must have preceded prose. In fact, a homo sapien, before he could speak, must have been first intrigued by the sound of a conch-shell, when sheer curiosity induced him to put the shells to his ears and lo and behold! he could hear the entrapped sound from millions of years

of activity in the earth, particularly in its oceans, since its birth. Automatically he started imitating the sound which in course of time gave birth to sounds like music supported by poetry and singing; Languages, poetry and prose in literature emerged only thereafter.

English poetry emerged some 1000 years ago in the Anglo-Saxon period with writing of Beowulf. But it was in any developed form at the time of Chaucer and thereafter during the Elizabethan period i.e. about 450 years ago.

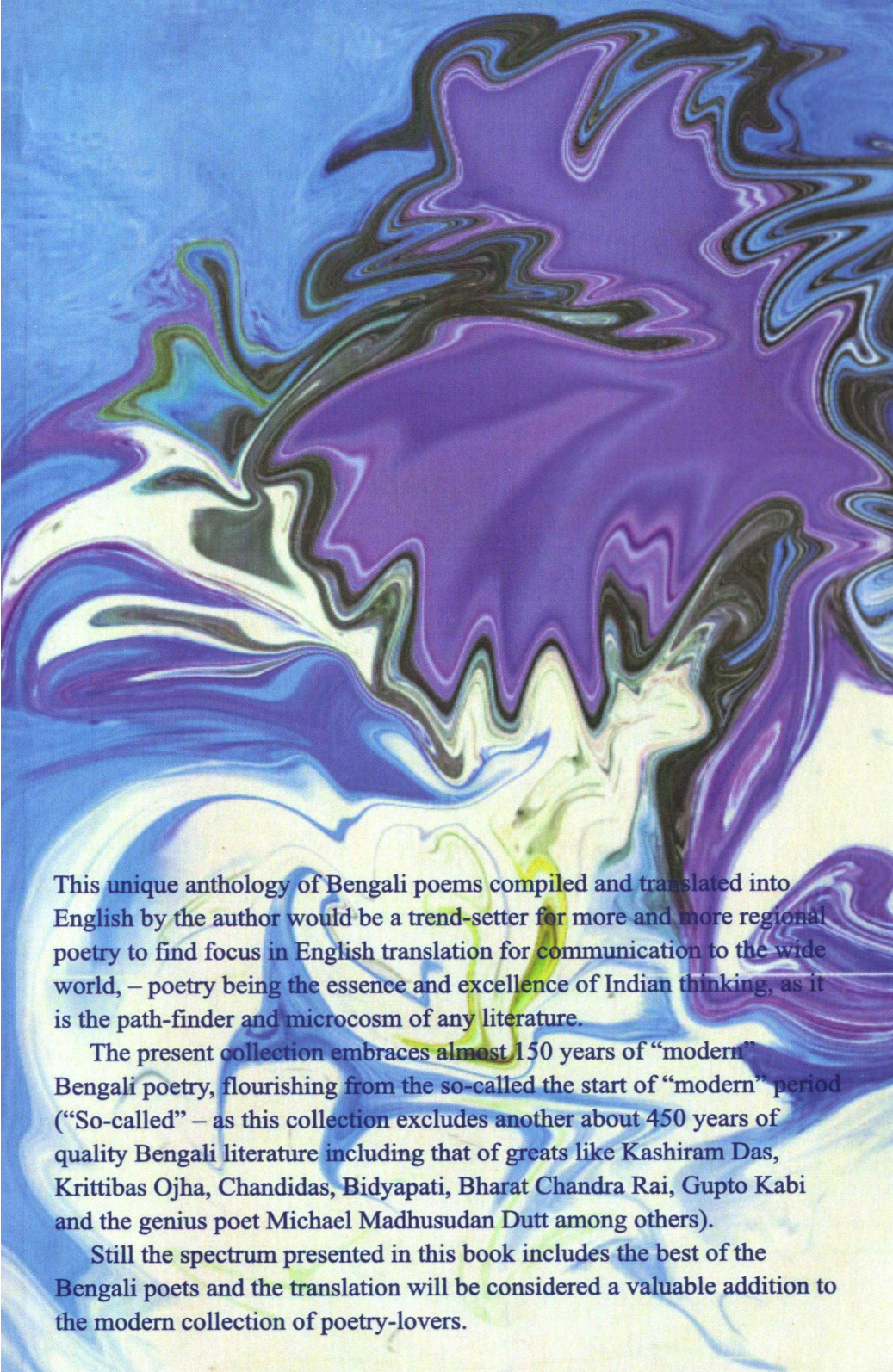
Bengali as a language emerged when Bengalees as a race formed through a heady mixture of Australian, Mongolian and Dravidian influences, generally as a result of tectonics and other pulls and pushes, after the last Ice Age (25000 years ago).

Earlier than 1500 BC, when Bengali was not 'Bengali', poetry emerged in Sanskrit and later in Prakrit-Sanskrit and Pali; but real Bengali poetry in the Bengali language germinated at the time of Chandidas, about 600 years ago!

Thus English poetry is not in any way older than Bengali poetry or Tamil poetry, which is much older. It is only the 'Colonial Stint' and slavish mentality that made some Bengalees infer that the real emergence of Bengali poetry happened, only when inspired by English literature.

Indian poets from time immemorial, had been composing poetry in Tamil and Sanskrit, in tribal tongues of the hills, the forests or sea-shore backwater regions and in various regional languages, and in off-shoots of diverse mainstream languages. Some had composed and memorized in the absence of developed alphabets. Poetry writing/composing has never stopped. It had and has been going on and on. The writers/composers never hesitated. The more the obstacles, the more was their urge.

Poetry is unstoppable and language, region, country or the age or stage of human development, are no barriers.



This unique anthology of Bengali poems compiled and translated into English by the author would be a trend-setter for more and more regional poetry to find focus in English translation for communication to the wide world, – poetry being the essence and excellence of Indian thinking, as it is the path-finder and microcosm of any literature.

The present collection embraces almost 150 years of “modern” Bengali poetry, flourishing from the so-called the start of “modern” period (“So-called” – as this collection excludes another about 450 years of quality Bengali literature including that of greats like Kashiram Das, Krittibas Ojha, Chandidas, Bidyapati, Bharat Chandra Rai, Gupto Kabi and the genius poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt among others).

Still the spectrum presented in this book includes the best of the Bengali poets and the translation will be considered a valuable addition to the modern collection of poetry-lovers.